

STONES BEFORE THE OCEAN

[a worship poetry anthology]

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Introduction

This anthology was conceived a number of years ago whilst I was at University and I was looking for poetry for use in worship after picking up *Spoken Worship* by Gerard Kelly. As a creative writing student I was interested in the idea of using poetry within worship and *Spoken Worship* was a big influence on how I came to think about worship as a poet and a leader of sung worship. However, in the years that followed I never did find the book I was looking for. In the mean time I independently published my own books until I finally gained the confidence to seriously consider putting together a full anthology of worship poetry. I always intended this to be a collaborative effort and having come through the process now I feel blessed and truly amazed by the support people have given and the enthusiasm towards the idea and so I want to thank everyone who encouraged me in this effort.

I really believe that poetry has an important role in how we worship and how we come into relationship with God. Poetry gives us the words that we do not have or cannot find, poetry helps us to see differently and it challenges us in the most eloquent and simple ways, as humble words read against silence. And as a poet I feel that it is my job to try and capture something of the ineffable but not try and define it. Some of the poets featured here have written hundreds and often thousands of poems, each providing a mere glimpse of our Creator, each subsequent poem further seeking the face of God. I believe that poetry is about interacting with mysteries like love and death and religion and I think about worship in the same way. I want to embrace the mystery of God but know that as I fling my arms open in awe, know that the living God will meet me.

The poets included in this anthology are from the past and the present, from all over the world and from different traditions and different age groups. We range from vicars and scholars to scientists and doctors to teachers and carers to writers and artists to missionaries and campaigners to office managers and administrators

but we all come seeking God, hoping to bring glory to God in the small ways that we can, but in the belief that in doing so we get to see more of who God is and know God more.

I want to thank all these contributors who have generously given permission for their poems to be used here, without them this book would not be. I also thank them for getting behind the heart of the project as a non-profit venture. I love the saying “there is no money in poetry and there is no poetry in money” as this is what I had in mind for this project all along - that people would be able to download it for free or buy it for as little as possible and use it without worrying about the cost of the resource. In return I ask that you respect the time and energy that we, the poets, have invested in this volume and that if you wish to use any of these poems in recordings, books, films, etc, that you seek our permission and that you use the resource in the spirit it is given.

Finally, I truly hope that this anthology will be a blessing, that in using it you will be challenged, assured, encouraged, inspired, comforted, awed and that through using it you will come to know God deeper.

Daniel Paul Gilbert

Each face has paced a thousand steps to gather here.
Journeys walked and lessons learnt.
Tears shed and shouts of delight cried.

As we walked, we never left your sight.
Your love abounding, surrounding,
Resounding in every recess of our lives.

At times, we have felt closer than ever before.
At times, we have felt frozen
Permafrost gripping our hearts and minds,
Wondering, will we ever find our way home?

So, let us gather here.
Called from every corner.
Pilgrims in pain,
Worshippers filled with wonder
Children of God, gathered by a Father's love.

Let our praises echo
Let our hearts be changed
As we gather now to worship God.

Each wave that breaks upon the strand,
How swift soe'er to spurn the sand
And seek again the sea,
Christ-like, within its lifted hand
Must bear the stigma of the land
For all eternity.

Look at the pebbles on the seashore, the grains of sand
None of them are formed in an instant
But are polished by the pounding of the waves
Heated, cooled, cracked, broken by the ever-changing weather
Processes designed by me that cannot be rushed
The beauty lies in the waiting

Wisdom is not formed in an instant
It too is a polishing process
Sanding down rough edges
Weathered by the storms of life
Just as in learning to walk, a child must fall many times
Wisdom grows in the learning

But even the young may grow weary until “true wisdom” is learned
Only those who learn to surrender their own agenda will soar on
heaven’s thermals
Only those who learn to listen to me will gain understanding
Only those who yield to my refining process will renew their strength

You ask, “How long?”
My child, look to the past and remember all I have done for you
Embrace the present waiting as opportunity to grow closer to me and
learn from me
You will be stronger in the future when you flow with my rhythm
I have all the answers you need if you just take the time to ask
Your heart will be filled with hope when you live in love with me
You need never grow faint or weary when you take time to rest in me

The question is not about the length of the trial
The answer lies in the journey of our relationship
Where you will find love, hope, peace and all the strength you need.

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet Thy tribute bring!
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him! praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour,
To our fathers in distress!
Praise Him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless!
Praise Him! praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness!

Father-like, He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes,
Praise Him! praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish:
Blows the wind, and it is gone.
But while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on.
Praise Him, Praise Him,
Praise the high eternal One!

Angels, help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face:
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;
Dwellers all in time and space,
Praise Him! praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Thank you God!
You have healed me and are healing me.
You never change,
How well I know it!
When I was far away,
I thought you had abandoned me.
Sorrow plagued my soul each day.
But through it all you fought for me.
You slaughtered my enemies and saved me.
You drew me out of the darkness,
To set me on you, my Rock.
I love you Lord, for you are always good.
I am weak but you are strong.
Be my strength, don't ever let me go.
Let me be your servant forever.
I am creation, you are the Creator.
I will praise you, Everlasting God.

O for a thousand tongues to sing**John Wesley**

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;

'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to his voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look unto him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace.

See all your sins on Jesus laid:
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man.

Awake from guilty nature's sleep,
And Christ shall give you light,
Cast all your sins into the deep,
And wash the Æthiop white.

With me, your chief, ye then shall know,
Shall feel your sins forgiven;
Anticipate your heaven below,
And own that love is heaven.

Fear takes a foothold
When it makes us feel helpless
When it takes our world
And makes it into something we don't understand

When a forest walk becomes a forest fire
And a locale of tranquillity and peace
Becomes an environment fixated on making us
Toasted and crispy

Or in a certain shark movie's famous opening scene
When a romantic ocean swim
So calm and serene
Creates an unimagined awareness
Of creatures circling in the deep

Or when a routine visit to the GP
Becomes the potential horror of that disease
Beginning with C

A certain semblance of predictability
Is what a lot of people need
And the disciples wouldn't have gotten that
From the Sea of Galilee

It was prone to sudden storms
That could seemingly spring out of nowhere
And isn't that so much like life?

For as long as we live life
There are a lot of things we can't foresee
And we'll always be let down
If predictable circumstances are what we need

But faith deals in what is seen
And what is unseen
Faith places God's authority
Above life's unpredictability

For in God's world
There are no surprises
No combination of events
That make him sit up and say
"I wasn't expecting that!"
So if fear finds a foothold
In the unexpected
And unknown
We can expect
And know
That God knows what we face
And knows
Exactly what to do
Whether it's rebuking the storm
Or taking our hand
And leading us through

The Dying Christian To His Soul

Alexander Pope

Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
O the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper; angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite?

Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy victory?
O Death! where is thy sting?

Shema

Based on the Jewish prayer

Hear O Israel!
The Lord our God.
The Lord is One.
Blessed be the name
of His glorious kingdom,
forever and ever.

And you shall love
the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul
and with all your strength.
And from this day
these commandments
shall be in your heart.

You shall teach them
to your children.
You shall speak of them
when you are sat at home
and when you walk along

and when you lie down
and when you rise up.

And you shall bind them
around your hand as a sign
and they shall be like jewels
upon your forehead,
and you shall write them
on the gates to your house
and on your door posts.

PAX

D.H. Lawrence

All that matters is to be at one with the living God
To be a creature in the house of the God of Life.

Like a cat asleep on a chair
at peace, in peace
and at one with the master of the house, with the
mistress
at home, at home in the house of the living,
sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.

Sleeping on the hearth of the living world,
yawning at home before the fire of life
feeling the presence of the living God
like a great reassurance
a deep calm in the heart
a presence
as of a master sitting at the board
in his own and greater being,
in the house of life.

A Creator: that's God at his foundation.
That's why the very first act
of my heavenly Father in time was creation.
He couldn't help the fact
that he absolutely had to make something.
He paused to think:
Creation was good – the stars, the spring,
colours, food and drink.

A Creator: with an artist's eye;
“good” wasn't good enough.
No, “very good” was the target for this to fly,
this display of power and love.
A living creature, made to be a friend,
to God and to one another.
For this great work that would be a good end.
It was us that he chose to uncover.

A Creator: who, like every great artist
put himself in his masterpiece.
To make man in his likeness would let him exist
in the world. It was time to cease.
And that, brothers and sisters, is why
every human shares this skill:
That of creation, now on display
in every leaf, tree and hill.

A Creator: could there ever be a greater mission
than to live like that's true?
Look, he made you and me, so catch his vision;
this plan was for you.
Get to work doing holy business here.
That call grows ever greater:
“Do not be afraid, I repeat: do not fear!
Be yourself, and like me: A Creator.”

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's Name be sung,
Through every land by every tongue.

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord;
Eternal truth attends Thy Word.
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns rise and set no more.

Your lofty themes, ye mortals, bring,
In songs of praise divinely sing;
The great salvation loud proclaim,
And shout for joy the Saviour's Name.

In every land begin the song;
To every land the strains belong;
In cheerful sounds all voices raise,
And fill the world with loudest praise.

"Please de-baptize me," she said.
The priest's face crumpled.
"My parents tell me you did it," she said.
"But I was not consulted. So
Now, undo it."
The priest's eyes asked why.
"If it were just about belonging to
This religion and being forgiven,
Then I would stay. If it were just
About believing
This list of doctrines and upholding
This list of rituals,
I'd be OK. But
Your sermon Sunday made
It clear it's
About more. More
Than I bargained for. So, please,
De-baptize me."
The priest looked down, said
Nothing. She continued:
"You said baptism sends
Me into the
World to
Love enemies. I don't. Nor
Do I plan to. You said it means
Being willing to stand
Against the flow. I like the flow.
You described it like rethinking
Everything, like joining a
Movement. But
I'm not rethinking or moving anywhere.
So un-baptize me. Please."
The priest began to weep. Soon
Great sobs rose from his deepest heart.

He took off his glasses, blew his nose, took
Three tissues to dry his eyes.
"These are tears of joy," he said.
"I think you
Are the first person who ever
Truly listened or understood."
"So," she said,
"Will you? Please?"

Requests

Digby Mackworth Dolben

I asked for Peace-
My sins arose,
And bound me close,
I could not find release.

I asked for Truth-
My doubts came in,
And with their din
They wearied all my youth.

I asked for Love-
My lovers failed,
And griefs assailed
Around, beneath, above.

I asked for Thee-
And Thou didst come
To take me home
Within Thy Heart to be.

three years was all he had
to reveal the infinite ages of God
walking distance was all he had
to cover light years of knowledge and truth
simple, illiterate folk
to teach the complexity of His plan
arrogant, hostile scholars
to teach the simplicity of his love

when they nailed him to the cross
did he hang there wondering
is it enough? It is finished -
but have they really grasped it?
that was when he knew that
revelation could not end

Christianity is not a finished product
to be analysed, preserved and taught
it is a living language always evolving
as modern Italian to classical Latin
so our living faith to old texts
the goldmine goes on giving

I've found the pearl of greatest price,
My heart doth sing for joy:
And sing I must, a Christ I have;
O what a Christ have I?

Christ is the Way, the Truth, the Life,
The way to God on high,
Life to the dead, the truth of types,
The truth of prophesy.

Christ is a prophet, priest and king,
A Prophet full of light,
A Priest that stands 'twixt God and man,
A King that rules with might.

Christ's manhood is a temple, where
The altar God doth rest;
My Christ, he is the sacrifice,
My Christ he is the priest.

My Christ he is the Lord of lords,
He is the King of kings;
He is the Sun of righteousness,
With healing in his wings.

My Christ, he is the Tree of Life,
Which in God's garden grows;
Whose fruit does feed, whose leaves do heal;
My Christ is Sharon's rose.

Christ is my meat, Christ is my drink,
My physic and my health,
My peace, my strength, my joy, my crown,
My glory and my wealth.

Christ is my father, and my friend,
My brother and my love;
My head, my hope, my counsellor,
My advocate above.

My Christ, he is the Heaven of heavens,
My Christ what shall I call?

My Christ is first, my Christ is last,
My Christ is all in all.

Here

Daniel Paul Gilbert

We long for the thin places
where heaven grazes earth,
we search for those moments
when your spirit is most tangible,
and because we have felt you
in the words etched upon a page
or we have heard you
in the movement of a symphony,
or we have seen you
in the brushstrokes on a canvas;
Because we have found you there
we have cluttered our lives with these noises,
drowning in the clamour of our expectation,
looking for the next hit to satiate our hearts.
We are lost in a one way conversation
with you, waiting for an opening to speak.

But you are already near to us
like treasure right beneath our feet.
You are already inside of us,
the life in every breath we take.
You are already with us,
the whisper among the chaos,
the quiet among the storm.
Here in the stillness.
Here in the calm.
Here.

He fumbles at your soul

Emily Dickinson

He fumbles at your soul
As players at the keys
Before they drop full music on
He stuns you by degrees,
Prepares your brittle nature
For the ethereal blow
By fainter hammers further heard,
Then nearer, then so slow
Your breath has time to straighten,
Your brain to bubble cool,
Deals one imperial thunderbolt
That scalps your naked soul.
When winds take forests in their paws
the universe is still.

Birds and Waves

David Russell

Lord God, You have given many of us two ears to shema and obey
We may hear your voice keenly in a specific way.
A musical instrument, choir or band
proclaim your presence is at hand.

feathered friend, with wings and beak
may offer a praise when heard to speak.

A large body of water heard breaking against the shore
reminds me you are awesome and to stop fretting just once more.

You who made oceans, hills, landscapes, and newborns to cry
each and all to be redeemed - in your manner and time.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
'My God and King.'
The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
'My God and King.'
The church with psalms must shout
No door can keep them out:
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
'My God and King.'

Fields, startlingly ablaze with colour,
flare out compelling invitations to draw near
to see the papery wonder of their petals,
before they yield to seed-heads, shrivelled, drear,
which broadcast tiny caskets, interred for many seasons,
'til fresh-turned earth prompts new-life to appear.

Galaxies, illuminated by their stars, blaze forth,
scatter their light to who knows where or whom.
Then in a churning, cataclysmic moment
one orb reduces all around it
to broth of cosmic chaos, dust and doom.

Yet in the diffuse remnant, lies a promise;
glorious regeneration,
suns, planets, asteroids and moons.

We, privileged dwellers on this planet,
with brains that let us revel
in the beauty of these disparate fields,
come into this world, grow by its generous nature
and after brief or lengthy span,
like flower and star, to death, our bodies yield.

Those left behind may grieve,
feel shock, loss, anger,
find it hard to cope.
Have courage now!
Dare to consider
such cosmic rhythms' inference;
beyond-life hope.

I AM

Anon

I am the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave of the ocean,
I am the murmur of the billows,
I am the ox of the seven combats,
I am the vulture upon the rocks,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valour,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of science,
I am the point of the lance in battle,
I am the God who creates in the head the fire.

Who is it who throws light into the meeting on the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

A Father's Loss and Hope Found

Dave Wise

Father I ask so many questions
I am so full of doubt
I want to know you, hear you, touch you,
Believe you're real

Your power, your goodness, your life, stir deep within me
But I know not how to satisfy my inner longings

I get angry, I am proud, I fear you, but do I know you?

So many hurts, so much pain, tears blind me, but do you take them
away?

Do you cry with me? Do you mourn what was lost?
Your very son on the cross

Help my unbelief Lord, help me to see,
Who it is who truly rescued me
I know not the way to go or how to proceed
I am begging humbly on my knees

Thank you father for your love and sovereignty
Goodness, grace, and life abundant is what you give
Resurrection, love, and newness abound
In the hope of your Son, Jesus, I am found

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

Come, we have a guest room
where you can recline with your servant king.
He will bathe your sore, dusty feet and you can rest.
Come, commune; join his other friends.
Together break bread and give thanks,
sing hymns and toast the coming Kingdom.
Come to the table with honest hearts.
Come, and in his presence find mercy,

find forgiveness and new purpose.
Come, celebrate the covenant that confers on us a Kingdom,
bought by the blood of the one who came to serve.
Do this in remembrance. Do this with eagerness.
And when you pray say, 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

Dark night of the soul

St John of the Cross

One dark night,
fired with love's urgent longings
ah, the sheer grace!
I went out unseen,
my house being now all stilled.

In darkness, and secure,
by the secret ladder, disguised,
ah, the sheer grace!
in darkness and concealment,
my house being now all stilled.

On that glad night,
in secret, for no one saw me,
nor did I look at anything,
with no other light or guide
than the one that burned in my heart.

This guided me
more surely than the light of noon
to where he was awaiting me
him I knew so well
there in a place where no one appeared.

O guiding night!
O night more lovely than the dawn!

O night that has united
the Lover with his beloved,
transforming the beloved in her Lover.

Upon my flowering breast
which I kept wholly for him alone,
there he lay sleeping,
and I caressing him
there in a breeze from the fanning cedars.

When the breeze blew from the turret,
as I parted his hair,
it wounded my neck
with its gentle hand,
suspending all my senses.

I abandoned and forgot myself,
laying my face on my Beloved;
all things ceased; I went out from myself,
leaving my cares
forgotten among the lilies.

By Grace I Fall

Vanessa Johnston

By grace I fall, by grace I rise
I look into my Savior's eyes
By grace I see, yes it is He
Who gave it all, who died for me

Now here is where it all begins
When sin arises from within
And I cannot foresee the day
When you alone will guide my way

Onto the path so straight and true
It guides others up to You
The trials, triumphs and the pain
In no words can be explained

How cracked and broken I have been
But how you've filled me over again
Your peace, your joy, your love so true
Must be what guides my steps to you

By grace I fall, by grace I rise
And you alone look in my eyes
When all is done, my life is through
By grace eternal I'll walk with you

Take the World, but Give Me Jesus

Fanny Crosby

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.
Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
Oh, the length and breadth of love!
Oh, the fullness of redemption,
Pledge of endless life above!
Take the world, but give me Jesus,
Sweetest comfort of my soul;
With my Savior watching o'er me,
I can sing though billows roll.
Take the world, but give me Jesus,
Let me view His constant smile;
Then throughout my pilgrim journey
Light will cheer me all the while.
Take the world, but give me Jesus.

In His cross my trust shall be,
Till, with clearer, brighter vision,
Face to face my Lord I see.

Grand Canyon

Nelize van Driel

how great is Your love for rock solid relations
yet in time rocks part through deep canyons

Your waters remain stilled;
Your mystery lies deep
Your raptors fulfilled
Your mountains so steep

how could man survive Your greatness?
even the eagle admires Your vastness!

Your tangerine gaze stares back at the sun
reflecting Your majesty where erosion has spun
its webs of beauty
cold veins are rare
the desert's peace treaty
with the hot bright glare

Christ Has No Body

St Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

The Long Way Home

Alyssa Underwood

It is out of the heart's cavernous longing and furious search
for love, significance, acceptance, approval, identity, security,
freedom, belonging, innocence, intimacy and transcendence—
out of its primordial memory of what was lost to us in the Garden—
that we begin to erect idols for ourselves.

Unconsciously we hope they might restore to us a taste of paradise,
taking away our fear and shame and isolation.
We yearn to go back but, alas, we cannot get in from there.
We ache to connect to beauty, to be desired by it as much as we
desire it,
and Jesus is the only door by which we may enter.
He is the Beauty, and all the rest are simply there like pealing bells
to arouse our hearts to Him and tell us that He is coming for us.

Still, as if we haven't quite yet heard and believed the message, we
keep
aimlessly trying to forge a false righteousness through our false gods.
When they are lost or the dreams of them unrealized we are
devastated,
for the shadows, echoes and reflections we had supposed would
finally
make us feel good about ourselves have been exposed as frauds,

and once again we are left to feel naked but without fig leaves to cover us.

It is at these precise moments, when the bottom of our false hope falls out,
that we are best prepared to encounter Christ in His intimate fullness and most apt to recognize at last that He alone is everything we have been so desperately wanting.
It is our boiling point, where the unbearable weight of failed expectation so crashes in on us that we are finally begging God to lift our idols off of us and deliver us from them, pleading with Him to come and capture us, crying out to Him to possess us fully.

My song for today

St Therese Lisieux

My life is but an instant, a passing hour.
My life is but a day that escapes and flies away.
O my God ! You know that to love you on earth
I only have today !...

Oh, I love you, Jesus ! My soul yearns for you.
For just one day remain my sweet support.
Come reign in my heart, give me your smile
Just for today !

Lord, what does it matter if the future is gloomy ?
To pray for tomorrow, oh no, I cannot !...
Keep my heart pure, cover me with your shadow
Just for today.

If I think about tomorrow, I fear my fickleness.
I feel sadness and worry rising up in my heart.
But I'm willing, my God, to accept trial and suffering
Just for today.

O Divine Pilot ! whose hand guides me,
I'm soon to see you on the eternal shore.
Guide my little boat over the stormy waves in peace
Just for today.

Ah ! Lord, let me hide in your Face.
There I'll no longer hear the word's vain noise.
Give me your love, keep me in your grace
Just for today.

Near your divine Heart, I forget all passing things.
I no longer dread the fears of the night.
Ah ! Jesus, give me a place in your Heart
Just for today.

Living Bread, Bread of Heaven, divine Eucharist,
O sacred Mystery ! that Love has brought forth...
Come live in my heart, Jesus, my white Host,
Just for today.

Deign to unite me to you, Holy and sacred Vine,
And my weak branch will give you its fruit,
And I'll be able to offer you a cluster of golden grapes
Lord, from today on.

I've just this fleeting day to form
This cluster of love, whose seeds are souls.
Ah ! give me, Jesus, the fire of an Apostle
Just for today.

O Immaculate Virgin ! You are my Sweet Star
Giving Jesus to me and uniting me to Him.
O Mother ! Let me rest under your veil
Just for today.

My Holy Guardian Angel, cover me with your wing.
With your fire light the road that I'm taking.
Come direct my steps... help me, I call upon you
Just for today.

Lord, I want to see you without veils, without clouds,
But still exiled, far from you, I languish ?
May your lovable face not be hidden from me
Just for today.

Soon I'll fly away to speak your praises
When the day without sunset will dawn on my soul.
Then I'll sing on the Angels lyre
The Eternal Today !

Journey Through The Wilderness

Elizabeth Trondsen

Alone and afraid.
Broken and lost.
She falls on her face, in the dust.
And then she hears His voice.
Calling.
Calling to her.
To come and rest.
To come and trust.
She lifts up her eyes from the dust.
She whispers His name, "Jesus."
He comes to her in the dark.
He speaks to her out of a burning bush.
She wrestles with Him each night...
"I will not let you go until You bless me."
Every anchor has been removed,
that He may be the only One left.
She clings to Him in the dark.
She lets Him hold her in the storm.
Alone and afraid.
Broken and lost.
She journeys through the wilderness.
She stops fighting the wilderness.

She lifts up her face from the dust.
Her eyes behold Him,
and He holds her in His love.
In the wilderness.

Then He takes hold of her right hand
and says to her: "Fear not."
He journeys with her through her wilderness.
To the other side.
Where there is a land flowing with milk and honey.
But first,
she must journey through the wilderness.
Until at last.
She has learned.
To trust.

When I survey the wondrous cross

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,

that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Elixir

Naomi Jurczak

How can there not be a God
when there is water?
The clear liquid that does everything for us;
heals, replenishes, restores, cleans, gives life.
Forty percent of us is not water. The rest is.
The sounds of it dripping, trickling, whispering and crashing.
The feel of it slipping over skin, yielding coldness
as you jump in on a hot day.
A moment of shock and breath taken away.
The smell of it, deep and earthy after it rains,
salty and crisp on a sea breeze.
The taste of it, like the essence of life trickling down my throat.
Swimming, sailing, catch it as it falls.

That there is liquid- drops and drops that come together and move
away, that pour and separate and pool.

It fills the sea bed and it fills us.
Wells of oceans.
Puddles, creeks, tarns, lakes and lochs.
Ponds, rivers, bays and seas.
Eternal mirrors that reflect the sky,
So many shades of blue.

All the names we have for blue never capture
that point of the sea at one with the sky.
That is holy.
Known deep in the heart but not by the tongue.

Unformed words stick to the salt on our lips.
The unknown, becoming known.

A Better Resurrection

Christina Rossetti

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numb'd too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimm'd with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.
My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk:
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall—the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.
My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perish'd thing;
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King:
O Jesus, drink of me

Sing praise,
Sing praise,
Sing praise to God alone.
All praise,
All praise,
All praise to God alone.

Oceans and mountains, sun, moon and stars – you made them all.
Father, Provider, giving your Son, we worship you.

Jesus, Messiah, Lamb who was slain, is on the throne.
Wisdom and honour, glory and power belong to you.

Eternal Spirit, giver of life, we breath you in,
Pointer to Jesus, sharing God's love, you send us out.

Litany To The Holy Spirit**Robert Herrick**

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch to keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the Furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath pray'd,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decay'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm toss'd about
Either with despair or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

In the warmth of the summer's air
In the peace in a time of silent prayer
In the breath of a newborn child's sleep
There are memories We will always keep

When a mother first holds her child
In the strength of a mustang running wild
In the hush of an ocean silent depths
There are feelings in us we will ne'er forget

Eagles fly and soar on lofty wings
Infants cry when their time of life begins
Seedlings grow from the fall of gentle rains
These are things we know,
But can we fully explain?

In the rise of a harvest moon
In the scent of a rose in fullest bloom
In the grace of the dancer's swirling form
Then our senses make us glad we're born

In the flames of the setting sun
In the softness of night that's just begun
In the lights of a vast and pinpricked sky
There are times we pause and think
And wonder "why?"

Breezes blow and yet I never seen
There's a mind that can only think a dream
Can you touch the light of falling stars?
These are things you know,
But can you prove they are?

In the roar of a breaking wave
We are kept from the cradle to the grave
We may know and our last and final hour
God's redeeming and Almighty power!

If I could shut the gate against my thoughts

John Danyel

If I could shut the gate against my thoughts
And keep out sorrow from this room within,
Or memory could cancel all the notes
Of my misdeeds, and I unthink my sin:
How free, how clear, how clean my soul should lie,
Discharged of such a loathsome company!

Or were there other rooms without my heart
That did not to my conscience join so near,
Where I might lodge the thoughts of sin apart
That I might not their clam'rous crying hear;
What peace, what joy, what ease should I possess,
Freed from their horrors that my soul oppress!

But, O my Saviour, who my refuge art,
Let Thy dear mercies stand 'twixt them and me,
And be the wall to separate my heart
So that I may at length repose me free;
That peace, and joy, and rest may be within,
And I remain divided from my sin.

His joints are gnarled roots in their ancient glory
& we are the mosses that sit on his knees.
His words are raked leaves blown in autumn's breeze;
they cling to our hair as he whispers our story.

God's voice fills our voids, although it has dried,
his word born to carry to the Earth's ends.
God's breeze must ever bend for frayed lives to mend,
a hymn we can sing after too many sighs.

Twisted is this tree, though only in form:
God's trunk is tough, his heartwood strong,
& the zephyr he sends speaks (never) wrong.
Recline on root, climb a branch, and be warmed.

From his weathered trunk to his feathered brows,
we crane our necks so our sight flashes
to where sunbeams peek from his eyelashes
& warm our small bodies through the clouds.

& still on his knees we sit, earth-bound.
Those beams of light stream down from God's eye,
his feet in the dirt and his face where birds fly...
not just the zephyr extends Earth around.

For God's toes burrow beneath the loam,
his branches bear the fruit of eons past,
& skies billow from his trunk's mammoth mast.
Vast God grows, & everywhere he sows home.

You may rejoice to think yourselves secure;
You may be grateful for the gift divine --
That grace unsought, which made your black hearts pure,
And fits your earth-born souls in Heaven to shine.
But, is it sweet to look around, and view
Thousands excluded from that happiness,
Which they deserved, at least, as much as you, --
Their faults not greater, nor their virtues less?

And, wherefore should you love your God the more,
Because to you alone his smiles are given;
Because he chose to pass the many o'er,
And only bring the favoured few to Heaven?

And, wherefore should your hearts more grateful prove,
Because for all the Saviour did not die?
Is yours the God of justice and of love
And are your bosoms warm with charity?

Say, does your heart expand to all mankind?
And, would you ever to your neighbour do --
The weak, the strong, the enlightened, and the blind --
As you would have your neighbour do to you?

And, when you, looking on your fellow-men,
Behold them doomed to endless misery,
How can you talk of joy and rapture then? --
May God withhold such cruel joy from me!

That none deserve eternal bliss I know;
Unmerited the grace in mercy given:
But, none shall sink to everlasting woe,
That have not well deserved the wrath of Heaven.

And, Oh! there lives within my heart
A hope, long nursed by me;
(And, should its cheering ray depart,
How dark my soul would be!)

That as in Adam all have died,
In Christ shall all men live;
And ever round his throne abide,
Eternal praise to give.

That even the wicked shall at last
Be fitted for the skies;
And, when their dreadful doom is past,
To life and light arise.

I ask not, how remote the day,
Nor what the sinner's woe,
Before their dross is purged away;
Enough for me, to know

That when the cup of wrath is drained,
The metal purified,
They'll cling to what they once disdained,
And live by Him that died.

Sphere Fear

Linna Monteath

We live in a cage of light,
curved bars of safe limit,
and probe the doubt outside
with unsure hands:
we glimpse the universe
and that beyond...
and struggle to grasp ideas

at the edge of our ability.

My thoughts change how my body works;
this DNA influences that DNA
a world away;
our spiritual appeal affects your well-being;
talking to a Petri dish improves cell division.
There is a pattern of connection,
a beautiful intricate reciprocity
in all that exists.

We pause, amazed and fearful.
What is this power?
How can it be?

The atmosphere hums with heaven
despite our cloth ears.

Found of Him That Sought Him Not

John Charles Earle

I will arise and to my Father go;
This very hour the journey is begun.
I start to reach the blissful goal, and, lo,
My spirit at one bound her race has run.
For seeking God and finding Him are one.
He feeds the rilllets that towards Him flow.
It is the Father Who first seeks the son,
And moves all heavenward swift or slow.
I dare not pride myself on finding Him.
I dare not dream a single step was mine.
His was the vigour in the palsied limb....
His the electric fire along the line....
When drowning, His the untaught power to swim.
Float o'er the surge, and grasp the Rock divine.

Oh Protector from Harm,

As I type these words on the same computer where I order books and blouses,

I pray that no hacker, evildoer, identity thief is gleaning my information and prying into my accounts.

I pray that the people who moved into my old home
(where my mailbox runneth over
with catalogs, instant loan opportunities, credit card offers, checking
account information)
are Your disciples.

I pray they conscientiously forward, shred or burn all of those
envelopes that don't follow me here.
I pray that they consider the harm they will inflict on me, my
daughter, themselves,
by setting up phony accounts, destroying my credit, buying stupid
stuff that will comfort them not.

I pray, God, for all of those who have had to suffer this plague of our
electronic age:
My brother, my professor, my mechanic—even Oprah—who needs
our prayers just as much as anyone.
I pray that consumers learn to value the work they do
enough to discern that which they don't need.

I know it's selfish, Lord, but I pray that my bankcard, my AMEX card,
my VISA, remains mine alone.
I pray You watch over these balances more closely than I,
More fastidiously than those expensive monitoring companies,
More scrupulously than the sentinels at KFC, Coca Cola and Roswell
Area 51.

Hold these numbers, codes, access words in the palm of Your hand,
dear Lord,
Just as You hold me, protected and private.

Come Unto Me

George MacDonald

Come unto Me, the Master says:--
But how? I am not good;

No thankful song my heart will raise,
Nor even wish it could.

I am not sorry for the past,
Nor able not to sin;

The weary strife would ever last
If once I should begin!

Hast thou no burden then to bear?
No action to repent?

Is all around so very fair?
Is thy heart quite content?

Hast thou no sickness in thy soul?
No labour to endure?

Then go in peace, for thou art whole;
Thou needest not his cure.

Ah, mock me not! I often sigh;
I have a nameless grief,

A faint sad pain—but such that I

Can look for no relief.

Come, come to him who made thy heart:
Come weary and oppressed;

To come to Jesus is thy part,
His part to give thee rest.

New grief, new hope he will bestow,
Thy grief and pain to quell;

Into thy heart himself will go,
And that will make thee well.

Seeds of Faith

Stephanie Malley

Yes, the soil is too shallow here, it's true;
the rains either too many or too few;
the sun does not shine long enough, I know:
yet still I wield and work my hoe.

My faith is not in water, light, or ground,
but in the one who spreads them all around:
my God who made the seeds that I will sow,
each guaranteed by him to grow.

When Love beckons to you, follow Him,
Though His ways are hard and steep.
And when His wings enfold you, yield to Him;
Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when He speaks to you, believe Him,
Though His voice may shatter your dreams,
As the north wind lays waste the garden.

For even as Love crowns you, so shall He crucify you.
Even as He is for your growth-so is He for your pruning.
Even as He ascends to your height
And caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
So shall He descend to your roots
And shake them in their clinging to the earth.

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto Himself,
He threshes you to make you naked.
He sifts you to free you from your husks.
He grinds you to whiteness.
He kneads you until you are pliant;
And then He assigns you to His sacred fire,
That you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.
All these things shall Love do unto you,
That you may know the secrets of your heart,
And in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.
But if in your fear you would seek only Love's peace
And Love's pleasures,
Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness
And pass out of Love's threshing floor,
Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh,
But not all of your laughter
And weep, but not all of your tears.

Love gives naught but Itself and takes naught but for Itself.

Love possesses not, nor would it be possessed;
For Love is sufficient unto Love.

When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart,"
But rather "I'm in the heart of God."
And think not you can direct the course of Love,
For Love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire, but to fulfil itself.
But if you love and must needs desires, let these be your desires:
To melt and be a running brook
That sings to the melody of the night.
To know the pain of too much tenderness,
To be wounded by your own understanding of Love;
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.
To wake at dawn with a winged heart
And give thanks for another day of loving;
To rest at noon hour and meditate on Love's ecstasy;
To return home at eventide with gratitude;
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart
And a song of praise upon your lips

Song of the Sea

Tami Zacharias

Based on Exodus 15

It came out of nowhere,
Though I know it happened over time.
A slow, halting journey into entrapment.
Now caught, ambushed, shut in on all sides.
There's no way back into slavery;
To the right, to the left, I am surrounded by death.
Looking ahead to see the surging waters of chaos,
Hearing the roar of hopelessness crash into my ears.

Oh God, my divine warrior, show yourself!
Gain glory for yourself among my enemies!
Look on me and have mercy, for I am undone.
Fight for me and go before me.
Part this churning flood of turmoil and let me pass through without
further harm.

Faltering forward, the only way yet one full of uncertainty.
Closer, closer to the edge, the noise is deafening.
My feet feel the tug of swirling sea, as it sprays distaste at my skeletal
form.
"The end! THE END!" screams my scattered mind,
Falling forward in surrender to the roiling pandemonium.

As surely as the next step would seal my fate in the heartless watery
grave,
I feel the sure, steadfast piece of land beneath my feet.
Looking up I see straining arms a cross, holding the quaking walls of
chaos at bay.
Surrounded still, but safely stumbling toward the other side.
Step by step, slowly, the snarling masses tower from the right and
left, but
Are powerless to consume me with their wrath.
Closer to the end, but looking back to see enemies in relentless
pursuit,
Out to enslave their victim once again.

Not knowing how, but that it's true, I reach the banks.
Crumpling down into a heap of exhaustion, but not safe yet.
Through dim slits I watch the bloodthirsty mass move closer,
Thinking the recent deliverance was only to wrench the sweet
tendrils of hope from my frail hands.
But as unbelievable and fantastic was the dry land, deliverance was
not too far away.
The unfaltering arms disappeared,
And the trembling embankments thundered down with a crash!
The sea covered my adversaries in its terrible embrace,

and they sank to the heart of the deep.

Oh God, my divine warrior, who is like you?

You stretched out your arms and parted the raging waters for your servant.

You took them away and it swallowed my foes!

You guided me through the depths of chaos and set me on you, my Rock.

There is no one like you, whose love is everlasting.

God will reign forever and ever.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah

William Williams

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliv'rer, strong Deliv'rer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;

Lord, I trust Thy mighty power,
Wondrous are Thy works of old;
Thou deliver'st Thine from thralldom,
Who for naught themselves had sold:
Thou didst conquer, Thou didst conquer
Sin and Satan and the grave,

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee.

In my father's house

Pam Robinson

(From Jesus' perspective about Joseph, his earthly father who
vanishes from the scriptures)

Darkened room, hushed voices,
presence of death.
Not unexpected, for you were old
when I was young.
Grief bites hard.

From babe to man,
you were at my side.
I kneel there now,
your hand rough in mine.
I lay my head on your chest,
my tears fall.

I hear her weeping at the door,
a question in her cry:
Make the impossible possible.
But that's not how his life was to be lived.

This book is written.
This chapter over.
This verse stilled.
These tears the only record.

I rise and hold her in my arms,
calm the storm of her widow's grief.
I lift her head and speak of another
room in my Father's house,
where we all will be received.

For it was written, when he was old
and I was young.

Thou lovely Source of true delight

Anne Steele

Thou lovely Source of true delight,
Whom I unseen adore!
Unveil Thy beauties to my sight,
That I may love Thee more.

Thy glory o'er creation shines;
But in Thy sacred word,
I read in fairer, brighter lines,
My bleeding, dying Lord.

'Tis here, whene'er my comforts droop,
And sins and sorrows rise,
Thy love, with cheerful beams of hope
My fainting heart supplies.

Jesus! my Lord, my Life, my Light,
Oh, come with blissful ray;
Break radiant through the shades of night,
And chase my fears away.

Then shall my soul with rapture trace
The wonders of Thy love;
But the full glories of Thy face
Are only known above.

What is this hole in my heart
This eternal discontentedness
That makes me create
This desire for transcendence

Why this demand for beauty
Seeking and shedding dead weight
Squeezing blood from rocks
And riding out the quake

How can I substitute wonder
Letting reason subjugate
Better to be butchered by grandeur
While spilling precious ink

If I could but meet the Author
And gaze into the eyes of wisdom
I could cease to curse my fate

And this holy thorn in my side
I would not berate
But embrace this pain
This thirsty soul

For this portion is Your pen
And I—Your poem
This composition of Yours
I will elevate

You are finer
Than the knife
I thrive under

You are greater
Than the space
I occupy

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and Christ are still my own!

Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Saviour, too;
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like man, untrue;
And, while Thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate, and friends disown me;
Show Thy face, and all is bright.

Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Christ will bring me sweeter rest.
O 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While Thy love is left to me;
O 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.

Haste then on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
God's eternal day's before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Swift shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

Breathe
Into my mouth
Breathe
Into my life
Breathe
Into my soul

Speak
And I will be Your mouth
Sing
And I will be Your voice
Command
And I am Yours

I stumble
And You pick me up
I cry out
And You hear me
I ask
And You answer
I knock
And You let me in

I am free
Because of You
I am healed
Because of You
I am Yours
Because You love me

In the hours of pain and sorrow, When the world brings no relief
When the eye is dim and heavy, And the heart oppressed with grief
While blessings flee, Savior Lord we trust in Thee!

When the snares of death surround us, Pride, ambition, love of ease
Mammon with her false allurements, Words that flatter, smiles that
please
Then ere we yield, Savior Lord be Thou our shield

When forsaken in distress, Poor despised and tempest-tossed
With no anchor here to stay us, Drifting, sail and rudder lost
Then save us Thou, who trod this earth with weary brow

Thou the hated and forsaken, Thou the bearer of the cross
Crowned of thorns and mocked and smitten, Counting earthly gain
but loss
When scorned are we, We joy to be the more like Thee

Thou the Father's best beloved, Thou the throned and sceptered King
Who but Thee should we adoring, All our prayers and praises bring?
Thrice blessed are we, Savior, Lord, in loving Thee

I realized conclusively today for the millionth time that all of this
Everything is a miracle
All this Life
Please begin enumerating to 300 billion and perhaps
When you reach the end of your time here
On yes this miracle of the galaxy
You will know the truth like birds know the tops of trees

And all the fighting and hurting over nothing made to seem like
everything
Will cease
And then disappear
When all we minor miracles comprising the larger miracle
Realize conclusively for the millionth time that we are One and
What we are is miraculous

Abide with me

Henry Francis Lyte

Abide with me! Fast falls the Eventide;
The darkness thickens. Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away:
Change and decay in all around I see.
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;
But as Thou dwellest with thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free, --
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea.
Come, Friend of sinners and thus bide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth did smile,
And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee.
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me!

I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O, abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where grave thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold then thy cross before my closing eyes;
Speak through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and Earth's vain shadows flee!
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Prayer of Illumination

Brendon Ward

Cause your Word Lord Jesus
To dwell richly in our hearts
Cause your peace Lord Jesus
To fill and reign in us

Speak your Word Lord Jesus
Through the preaching of your Word
Speak of grace Lord Jesus
Through gospel proclamation

Open our eyes Lord Jesus
To see you in your glory
Open our ears Lord Jesus
To hear have our faith built.

Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man, Thy glory may not see:
Only Thou art holy, there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky, and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Though I walk through the valley of shadow of death,
I fear no evil, cos' I have the faith.
Lord, I feel Your presence in every breath I take,
You have given me something, and that's Shield of Faith.

Lord, I put my trust in You all the time
And I will never ever put a step behind
As I now make a march through the battlefield,
I will make sure that I use the Wonderful Shield.

Lord, I want You to grab my hand
I want You to make me stand
I want the devil to understand
That I am here to fight him, till the end.

Amazing grace

John Newton

Amazing grace how sweet the sound!
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promis'd good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

This earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;

But God, who call'd me here below,
Will be for ever mine.

Seeking

Dorinda MacDowell

Never a more silent whisper,
Never a voice clearer, crisper,
Than communion with You...

Never a soul more aspiring,
Never a heart more desiring:
Sweet communion with You...

Never was God so forgiving,
Never such grace kissed the living,
Calvary's cross bleeds anew...

Never my soul so astounded,
Never before so surrounded,
I know not what to do...

On my knees, I surrender:
Your gaze, passionate, tender,
Draws my heart close to You...

Lord of the winds, I cry to thee
I that am dust,
And blown about by every gust
I fly to thee.

Lord of the water, unto thee I call,
I that am weed upon the waters borne,
And by the waters torn,
Tossed by the waters, at thy feet I fall.

This borrowed breath. These dirt lungs.
This fiery wind. This ashen tongue.

Spirit breathe. Spirit come.
We'll either be reborn or come undone.

Spirit blow. Come and go.
Steal my breath and make me whole.
Spirit, come and go.

These ancient words, "all is breath".
Purpose inhaled but rarely kept.

Ageless truths etched on hearts.
Near vacant lungs gasping hard.

Spirit blow. Come and go.
Steal my breath and make me whole.
Spirit, come.

Because I used to shun
Death and the mouth of hell
And count my battle won
If I should see the sun
The blood and smoke dispel,

Because I used to pray
That living I might see
The dawning light of day
Set me upon my way
And from my fetters free,

Because I used to seek
Your answer to my prayer
And that your soul should speak
For strengthening of the weak
To struggle with despair,

Now I have seen my shame
That I should thus deny
My soul's divinest flame,
Now shall I shout your name.
Now shall I seek to die

By any hands but these
In battle or in flood,
On any lands or seas,
No more shall I share ease,
No more shall I spare blood

When I have need to fight
For heaven or for your heart,
Against the powers of light
Or darkness I shall smite

Until their might depart,

Because I know the spark
Of God has no eclipse,
Now Death and I embark
And sail into the dark
With laughter on our lips.

Fraction**Jane Blanchard**

Restored by God to dignity,
let us behold the bread and wine,
as priest invokes the mystery
of grace ordained by love divine.

Then, one by one and pew by pew,
let us approach, partake the host,
sip from the cup, give thanks unto
the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Divine Ode**Joseph Addison**

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unwearied sun from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though, nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.

Father's Words

Cindy Norton

My sweet child oh so young,
Stand up and believe.
Know that I have won!
Though your heart bleeds now,
The wounds are not eternal.
Know this I vow.
My innocent child, don't hide!
But with a Godly voice sing out.
Know that, for you my son died.
Though the blood stains His hands,
His wounds paid the price for you.
Know that, I Am has cleansed the land.
My Righteous child oh so pure,
Forgiven sins, forgotten past.

Know that your faith will endure.
Though trials and pain will come,
Your wounds are not eternal.
Know this, to Glorify I Am, your work is done!

Last lines

Emily Brontë

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life--that in me has rest,
As I--undying Life--have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as wither'd weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine Infinity;
So surely anchor'd on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,

And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou--Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

On Gazing

Kelsey Lynn Sivertson

When was the last time you just looked at him?
while the world and all its noise raged on
but the volume was slowly turned to zero and you just
looked at him
when you didn't say a word because one look gave the confidence
that you've never
had to defend yourself
because he has always been for you
and one look rid you of the impulse
to hide your face because
you caught a glimpse of those hands
that bled mercy that one time
and suddenly,
you weren't too little or too much
you were exactly where you should be
where you needed to be.

Maybe for some time
you have been swirling
in winds of uncertainty
because your branch broke off
when he died, when she left you, when you lost them
but now
all you need is to look

and you will feel yourself being replanted
because his roots run deeper than the distance you ran
and this carpet is no longer just carpet
this altar, your altar
where his eyes both humble and honor you
and his word fights for and with you
because he has been waiting for you to remember
that he has always been first your father
and home has always been with him.

Easter

Edmund Spenser

Most glorious Lord of Lyfe! that, on this day,
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;
And, having harrowd hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest dye,
Being with Thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live for ever in felicity!
And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same againe;
And for Thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne!
So let us love, deare Love, lyke as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

There, look, see -
in the place where the wind
blew the brush fire through
the summer pasture burned
every blade of quiet grass, cremated
every ground-hugging insect, chased
every feral rabbit toward
the safety of the wet creek;

the wildflowers are blooming,
bright sky bluebonnets,
red-orange flames of Indian paintbrushes,
tiny yellow-sunned coreopsis, thicker here
than any part of the unscarred field,
a phoenix of color rising from the ashes,
a benediction rising from the flames.

Look not with jealous eye
Upon thy brother's ways;
But overlook his many faults
To find some good to praise.
For hid, within the human breast
Some precious gem may be;
Then e'er forgive thy fellow man,
As God forgiveth thee.
Gently his failings scan,
Look kindly on him now,
And nobly weigh the better part,
Nor think him less than thou.

Remember, human 'tis to err,
And none from sin are free;
Then e'er forgive thy fellow man,
As God forgiveth thee.
Bear with thy brother yet.
Though he may treat thee ill,
Perchance life's bitter cup he drinks,
With wrong his heart may fill.
Thou knowest not how dark and drear
The path he treads may be,
Then e'er forgive thy fellow man,
As God forgiveth thee.
Pray for thy brother still,
Though he betray thy trust;
Oh! Think how soon death's mighty wave
May sweep us to the dust.
Let pity calm the swelling tide,
Of passion's raging sea,
And e'er forgive thy fellow man,
As God forgiveth thee

Fearless

Anna Angell

Fearless.

But not because I carry a gun,
Or even that I've overcome,
But because I am the weakest one.
Nothing to prove,
No one to beat;
Victory comes in my own defeat

And so I am made fearless.

Defiant.

But not because I love the fight
Or shut my eyes to the changing light,
But because I'm weak and foolish and safe;
Held tight within Love's strong embrace.

And so I am defiant.

Christ who knows all His sheep

Richard Baxter

Christ who knows all His sheep
Will all in safety keep;
He will not lose His blood,
Nor intercession:
Nor we the purchased good
Of His dear Passion.
I know my God is just,
To Him I wholly trust
All that I have and am,
All that I hope for.
All's sure and seen to Him,
Which I here grope for.
Lord Jesus, take my spirit:
I trust Thy love and merit:
Take home this wandering sheep,
For Thou hast sought it:
This soul in safety keep,
For Thou hast bought it.

O Lord
You are my Pole Star
My centre of gravity
The need of my heart
The will of my mind
My centre
My circumference
My radius
My diameter.
You send your
Depth charge into
My deepest longings
And give me your very own
Personal belonging.
You have shown
Me my centre
Of balance
How you created me
With an inbuilt
Balance that sustains me
That balance is your Cross.
Your Resurrection Cross
For me.
You came to the end of yourself on this earth
So that I could come to the beginning of myself in
Eternity
Starting the very moment
I said to you
"You are the one Lord Jesus
The only one."
That moment of belonging gained
When you transferred
Your
Glory
On to me
A sinner.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.

Jesus,
I pray,
that you arise
the courage to faith in
my heart
once again.
So that out of the ashes of
sin, doubt and pain,
the delicate flower of trust will
grow
into a tree
one day.
Who knows,

one day
a tree.

Touch
my battered heart,
I pray,
to ask and receive,
I pray.
To come as I am,
I pray,
to you as you are.
To meet the One,
I pray,
who was always there
and is always near
and will always be,
and love
and mercy me.

Draw me near,
I pray.
Make this day a day
of glory touching ground
and beggars wearing crowns
of trust as large as trees.
Boasting how He
has set them free.
Has poured
glimpses of eternity
into their souls of unbelief
and led them home
and let them be
His Own
His Own
His Own.

Holy Spirit, Truth divine,
Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God and inward light
Wake my spirit, clear my sight.
Holy Spirit, Love divine,
Glow within this heart of mine;
Kindle every high desire;
Perish self in Thy pure fire.

Holy Spirit, Power divine
Fill and nerve this will of mine;
Grant that I may strongly live,
Bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, Right divine,
King within my conscience reign;
Be my Lord, and I shall be
Firmly bound, forever free.

Holy Spirit, Peace divine,
Still this restless heart of mine;
Speak to calm this tossing sea,
Stayed in Thy tranquillity.

Holy Spirit, Joy divine,
Gladden Thou this heart of mine;
In the desert ways I sing,
"Spring, O Well, forever spring."

Now incline me to repent,
Let me now my sins lament,
Now my foul revolt deplore,
Weep, believe, and sin no more.

(A soft poem written in the dead silence of dark morning.)

Can't sleep, and the night air smells of the greenery of pine.
Moths embed themselves in their nests, in the crevice of the ceiling.
They rest, but not sleeping.
Why this torment?
Loathe you, Insecurity.
Heaven knows why.

Make it right, you-
 -stirring up things that ought not be stirred.
Sad seeds
reap a blue harvest.
 Don't be sad, you.
 Him forsake never will He, you.
Soothe that rhythm hurting in your heart, too.
 He takes away it with the blessing, you-
 -if you don't soon
 Know Him better than the devil say true.
Next time, your troubles won't be so blue.
 Love me, you.
 Who?
You.

All night had shout of men, and cry
Of woeful women filled His way;
Until that noon of sombre sky
On Friday, clamour and display
Smote Him; no solitude had He,
No silence, since Gethsemane.

Public was Death; but Power, but Might,
But Life again, but Victory,
Were hushed within the dead of night,
The shutter'd dark, the secrecy.
And all alone, alone, alone,
He rose again behind the stone.

Baptism

Jaco Mostert

There where You flow over life breath. Hover in the halls between bone and consciousness. Evening out the strips of light lingering at the end of horizons. I fall in to You like a drowning man. I no longer kicking. And the air around me is thin breathing the memories of dead men with their faces killed by sin. And the trees that have called Your name are changing, in autumn it celebrates dying. I'll remember You as I go down this river of sacrifice to drown to be born inside of You.

Peace

Henry Vaughan

My Soul, there is a country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skillful in the wars;
There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits, crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And (O my Soul awake!)

Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

In this house

Steven Quantick

In this house
The walls are always moving
In an in out rhythm
Like they're breathing
And the bricks are like springs
As they widen like an artery
Giving lifeblood to those in need

In this house
The pictures and portraits are full of history
And they're faces we can point to and say
"They changed me"
And there's a portrait of a Son
Of whom we say
"He saved me"

And there's a whole wing
With rooms just meant for sleeping
Where we can rest in the knowledge that love won't let us go
And in the library
Books in every language spoken

And the unspoken words
And thoughts
And pictures
That reach the depths of how every heart is feeling

This is a house of the social
And of meeting
And a place of change
From the top of your head
To the very core of your being
And as it overflows to the streets
Like Christmas lights
It's a house of blessing

And together we each bring
Our answer to the question
"What do you have in your hands?"
And we tessellate each jigsaw piece
Into an infinitely complex
Changing how the world is turning plan

Because we are this house
This house is something set apart and different
But a place safe and familiar
To those who live there
And for those who are yet to walk through the doors
And come to love it

Ecclesiastes**Gilbert Keith Chesterton**

There is one sin: to call a green leaf gray,
Whereat the sun in heaven shuddereth.
There is one blasphemy: for death to pray,
For God alone knoweth the praise of death.

There is one creed: "neath no world-terror's wing
Apples forget to grow on apple-trees.
There is one thing is needful everything
The rest is vanity of vanities.

Already given

Fran Brady

fill me up , Lord; empty vessel, me
colour me pretty, Lord; blank canvas, me
mould and sculpt me, Lord; potters' clay, me
light me up, Lord; space of shadows, me
delight my ears, Lord; silent and deaf, me
open up my life, Lord; limited, shuttered me

what is this empty, colourless lump of clay?
what is this shadowy, silent, closed-up box?
I do not know it or recognise
its place in my creation
I have poured out my spirit upon you
I have shone forth my power upon you
I have lit you up with the colours of love
I have sounded out my clarion call
a vibrant drum roll
to shatter your shutters
and rupture your limits
I have planted eternity in your heart

why go on asking and asking?
I tire of your demands
for the already-given
now listen to MY demands:
be full
be bright
be shaped

be lit up
be full of music
be open wide
live the life
for ME

In the bleak midwinter

Christina Rossetti

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

Heaven is opened as angels applaud.
Veil torn asunder for views of the Lord.
How can it be that a sinner like me
Should gaze on the things of eternity?
Who's worthy of it all?

Upon His breast I laid my head, this Son
Whose shining face, like His created sun,
Fells me, as dead, beside once pierced feet,
That crushed Satan, enforcing his defeat.
He's worthy of it all.

Who is this One that's like a Lamb once slain?
Astonished angels tremble at the stain
Of blood that means more than the world to me
And ushers me into heav'ns majesty.
He's worthy of it all.

Strange creatures worship You, the King of Kings,
While angels shield their faces with bright wings.
The elders' crowns are thrown before Your throne
Blessing and glory, thanks are Yours alone.'
You're worthy of it all.

From Ghana and Zimbabwe to Beijing
Akan and Shona blend with Mandarin
Their voices like so many waters roar
Redeemed by blood they bow down and adore.
You're worthy of it all.

In the depth of my soul there is
A wordless song—a song that lives
In the seed of my heart.
It refuses to melt with ink on
Parchment; it engulfs my affection
In a transparent cloak and flows,
But not upon my lips.

How can I sigh it? I fear it may
Mingle with earthly ether;
To whom shall I sing it? It dwells
In the house of my soul, in fear of
Harsh ears.

When I look into my inner eyes
I see the shadow of its shadow;
When I touch my fingertips
I feel its vibrations.

The deeds of my hands heed its
Presence as a lake must reflect
The glittering stars; my tears
Reveal it, as bright drops of dew
Reveal the secret of a withering rose.

It is a song composed by contemplation,
And published by silence,
And shunned by clamour,
And folded by truth,
And repeated by dreams,
And understood by love,
And hidden by awakening,
And sung by the soul.

It is the song of love;
What Cain or Esau could sing it?

It is more fragrant than jasmine;
What voice could enslave it?

It is heartbound, as a virgin's secret;
What string could quiver it?

Who dares unite the roar of the sea
And the singing of the nightingale?
Who dares compare the shrieking tempest
To the sigh of an infant?
Who dares speak aloud the words
Intended for the heart to speak?
What human dares sing in voice
The song of God?

Recalled From the Brink

Jacques Boulet

There I stood on the edge of the abyss, lost and helplessly alone. The darkness was thick, but not impenetrable; not like it is beyond the brink.

And though the place was vast and desolate, my thoughts and apprehensions pressed in from all sides to keep me company.

Indeed, I feared I might suffocate. Fear – how does one describe it? It was not only a stench, but also an awful taste which permeated the counterfeit air.

I could sense something in those shadows feeding on my fears, enjoying my pain. Though I fought it with all my being, I could feel the

ground giving way beneath my feet, and every moment I sensed the abyss growing yet nearer than before.

Most terrifying, however, was the reflection in the mirror held to my soul, for the darkness had nearly taken hold.

And then a tremor ripped through my being as a whisper broke through the silence like thunder. Something had called my name.

In that moment fear and doubt left me, replaced by shame, and then, humbled, I fell to my knees.

What appeared to be torches held high became visible in the distance and I began to crawl away from the abyss, strengthened by something unseen.

Darkness gave way to thick fog, and now on my feet I walked clumsily, one uncertain step at a time.

When finally the fog receded and took the bitter cold of that place with it, it was clear I was no longer alone.

With that realization I shed the agony of a lonely soul and joined the friendly faces waiting to welcome me.

What I mistook for torches initially was the glow emanating from these happy souls, behind whom could be seen a large fire, evidently the Source.

Though not fully understanding, I felt my fears melt away and I let them lead me to the Flame.

Now, walking with more confidence, I approached and, though undeserving, was given a light of my own and was thus joined to the growing body around that central Light.

Such comfort was in that Presence and such joy was in that unity, that my doubt became confidence and my solitude was utterly

forgotten. It was clear, however, that this was not the end. Indeed, far from it.

A new life was given me and, with it, new responsibilities. To simply walk would not be sufficient. I must learn to run. No, better yet, to fly.

I must be a light to those recalled from the brink.

Breathe on me, Breath of God

Edwin Hatch

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity

I believe in one international church.
I believe in an inter-racial and unbiased church of many nations.
I believe in one church of many traditions.
I believe in one church not hemmed in by history or by man-made borders.
I believe in a God for whom his pallet of skin colours reflects his love of diversity.
I believe in God-given racial differences.
I believe in one creator God who made all mankind equal.
I believe in a church that reflects her maker's love of difference.
I do not believe in uniformity.
I believe in the common language of love for one another, for neighbours and for enemies that transcends local dialects.
I believe in one sundry collection of priests who are called to serve one God together, saved by one sacrifice once and for all time.
I believe in the promise of a resurrected church drawn from all generations to meet her bridegroom.
I believe in one eternal wedding feast which features everything from the finest vegetable samosas to the richest steam puddings.
I believe in one extravagant Father who has built one massive mansion with many rooms so all his people can come and dwell together.
I believe in God's Kingdom come.

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear -

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast,
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear?

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give His joy to all:
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by:
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

O He gives to us His joy,
That our grief He may destroy:

Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.
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Can I see another's grief,
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Can I see a falling tear,
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The Pit

Chloe Ross

In the depths of despair
In the far reaches of desperation
In a dark and miry pit
You are there

I don't feel You
I don't see Your light illuminating the thick impenetrable darkness
around me
I don't feel Your comfort and touch for the gnawing and deep pain
within me
But I know that You are there
I don't see Your purpose and plan for where I am
I can't see a reason for it
I can't see Your hope that I will come out of the pit I'm in
I've plummeted down to the depths and there seems little hope of
rescue and escape

I pray, people pray for me, there seems little change
I don't feel You with me
But I know You are there
And I know that you are good
Slowly, I crawl upwards, out of the pit

I keep falling back into it again
But each time I'm a little nearer the exit, the light that shines far away
Like an insect, I am drawn to it, desperate for it, for a glimpse of life
outside the darkness and turmoil that I feel

I'm on a journey
And as I get closer to the light
I can see I've been using unseen footholds
That all along You've been working and helping me get out

I look at myself, the journey has made me stronger already
I've built strength in muscles I've not had to use so much before
My eyes have now grown accustomed to the darkness and although I
keep searching for the light, I'm stronger in the dark than I've ever
been

There's still a long way to go before I reach the exit, the journey
carries on
But I know now I will reach the light
Though the path may be indirect, uneven, rocky and challenging
I will escape, there is hope
I know You have been with me the whole way and I can trust You to
aid and assist me to the end
Thank you that I need You and that I can rely on You
I know the pit has changed me, that You have changed me and I will
emerge a different person; stronger with a new and well-founded
identity, ready for the future whatever that may bring, holding all
things loosely but You
Knowing that You will never leave or forsake me, that You use all
things for good, that I can trust in Your plan and purpose
independent of how I feel and what is going on around me
Gripping to You like the footholds and never letting go again

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

Beautiful, His Grace to me
Unmerited and free
Precious freedom costly bought
Through death on Calvary

Wonderful, His Mercies
That are made new every day
Sins paid for and forgiven
Forgotten, cast away

Incredible, the peace He gives
The cares He takes away
The Source of all I'll ever need
He provides each day

Marvellous, His loving
A sinner such as me
Incredible adoption
To a heavenly family

Wonderful, His love to me
When I was still far away
The price for me, He freely paid
His blood has set me free

That Day of Wrath, That Dreadful Day

**Thomas de Celano
Translator Walter Scott**

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heav'n and earth shall pass away!
What pow'r shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shriv'ling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heav'ns together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead,

Lord, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to Judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou the trembling sinner's Stay,
Tho' heav'n and earth shall pass away.

carry me, Lord,
please carry me
pick up these feet
too tired to walk
this heart
too burdened to feel
these lips
too tired to talk
this mind
too clouded to think
my life
is at an end
and that
is where Yours
begins...

Weigh me the fire; or canst thou find
A way to measure out the wind?
Distinguish all those floods that are
Mixed in that wat'ry theater,
And taste thou them as saltless there,
As in their channel first they were.
Tell me the people that do keep
Within the kingdoms of the deep;
Or fetch me back that cloud again,
Beshivered into seeds of rain.
Tell me the motes, dust, sands, and spears
Of corn, when summer shakes his ears;
Show me that world of stars, and whence

They noiseless spill their influence.
This if thou canst; then show me Him
That rides the glorious cherubim.

Weaving

Andy Stinson

As the Word is woven in the womb,
A tiny bone warp
On which flesh is knitted;
A fragile form where hope is homed in flesh,
Fears forgotten as a new day dawns,
This child is born into the world.

Many will say with boldness,
With confidence coming from cast iron truth
That unmistakably,
Unquestionably,
He meant this.

But this child grew to be a man,
Not a message.
A lover, a sharer,
Laughter flowing like living water.
Food fondly shared.
Time gladly given.
Relational grace never reducible to a soundbite shouted with surety.
His questions,
Invitation to inhabit and be,
Infiltrate the quiet corners of our existence.
He sits in the empty chair
And welcomes us home.

And now, I sit at the loom.
Let laughter and love be my threads,

Grace and peace pattern
The fragile fabric I form.
Let this cloth clothe the naked.
Let it be a Tablecloth Spread for my foes.
Let it be a blanket offered to
The rejected, the neglected.
Let it be the shroud that carries me home.

Religious Musings – an excerpt**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.
But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts
Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
And that in His vast family no Cain
Injures uninjured (in her best-aimed blow
Victorious Murder a blind Suicide)
Haply for this some younger Angel now
Looks down on Human Nature: and, behold!
A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad
Embattling Interests on each other rush
With unhelmed rage!
'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves

Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
This the worst superstition, him except
Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
The plenitude and permanence of bliss!

Toy-bewitched,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre Man, no common sire
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
Feeling himself, his own low self the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one Self! Self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
This the Messiah's destined victory!

Awe

Daniel Paul Gilbert

Every word we could ever write
is a dull light before Your entirety,
and every thought we could ever form
will become less than a blink in Your eternity.
You are more than alpha and omega
outside of what we distinguish as beginning and end
You are holier than our perceptions of holy
eclipsing our values, Your purity transcends.
You are brighter than our definitions of glorious
Your beauty burns brighter than the sun

The abundance of Your splendour would blind us
To fully gaze upon it would render us undone.
And You exceed our expectation of incarnation
The enfleshment of immensity that reaches
With arms spread open wide
Out to the furthest niches.

You are Inexpressible

You are 'I am that I am'

And we are just stones before Your ocean
who will never wholly understand.

And yet...

You invite us to explore You,
To know You through the limitations of our humanity
You allow us into Your presence
As if we could even stand it's completeness.
And You cover our frailty with your love,
You smother our weakness with your strength
You accept us as we are
Not as a pitying deity,
but with the heart of a father.

O Christ come among men

Synesius of Cyrene

O Christ come among men
as source of light,
Your ineffable birth
is before the beginning of time.
You are the radiant light shining with the Father.
You irradiate lusterless matter
and illumine the souls of the faithful.

You have created the world
and fixed the orbit of the stars;
You sustain the axis of the earth,
You save all mankind.
You guide the sun in its course
to light up all our days
and the crescent moon
which dispels the darkness of night.
You make the seed to sprout
preparing food for the flocks.
From your inexhaustible fount
You pour out the splendour of life
making fruitful the whole universe.

Single Thoughts

Naomi Jurczak

The Idea of God

One day
in the last of your moments
you are going to wonder why
you laughed at the idea of God.

(knowing God when it's convenient)

Same

How is it?
We are all born the same and die the same
but make each other so unsafe in-between?

Time is Limited

What will be left of you on this earth?

Bones.

That once held a soul.

(the fallibility of the body, the eternity of the soul)

God Our Refuge

Richard Chenevix Trench

If there had anywhere appeared in space
Another place of refuge where to flee,
Our hearts had taken refuge in that place,
And not with Thee.

For we against creation's bars had beat
Like prisoned eagles, through great worlds had sought
Though but a foot of ground to plant our feet,
Where Thou wert not.

And only when we found in earth and air,
In heaven or hell, that such might nowhere be—
That we could not flee from Thee anywhere,
We fled to Thee.

Our God, this hour of this year,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, who had and has no peer,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, whose wrath can be severe,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, who sent a Son so dear,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, whose Son felt pain and fear,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, whose Son did shed a tear,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Our God, as His return draws near,
Be gracious to each sinner here.

Throw away thy rod,
Throw away thy wrath:
O my God,
Take the gentle path.

For my heart's desire
Unto thine is bent:
I aspire

To a full consent.

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But by book,
And thy book alone.

Though I fail, I weep:
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove;
Love will do the deed:
For with love
Stony hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot;
Love's a man of war,
And can shoot,
And can hit from far.

Who can 'scape his bow?
That which wrought on thee,
Brought thee low,
Needs must work on me.

Throw away thy rod;
Though man frailties hath,
Thou art God:
Throw away thy wrath.

In the spirit of chagrin, there is a smell that stings the senses.
A fragrant melancholy erodes itself amid the atmosphere of my folly.

Lack of good sense, she smells of.

In the arabesque of zephyr from an open door it came in the form of.
A demon's dance intent on delivering distress to its highest degree.

Tell me, woman of low virtue, how you came to be thus humiliated?
Was it the lies that condemned you?
The shame that enveloped you?
The sin that suffocated you?
The iniquitous knot of failure forming in the pit of you?
Yes
that's it.

Eat this vexation—this torment on toast.

 Morning, I deceive you.

 Noon, I despise you.

 Evening, I dash all of the things of His delight in you upon a
stone.

Look at you.

Forget who He says you are.

He's forgotten you.

As you bathe in these mortified toxins, I seethe in my destruction of
you.

Your discomfort titillates me.

The loss of your dignity fastens the smile in the scales of my face.

Confess your chagrin spirit, child of Elohim, as I am ever fastened
to the lower extremity of your ankles.

Thy faithfulness, Lord, Each moment we find,
So true to thy word, So loving and kind!
Thy mercy so tender To all the lost race,
The vilest offender May turn and find grace.

The mercy I feel To others I show,
I set to my seal That Jesus is true:
Ye all may find favour Who come at his call,
O come to my Saviour, His grace is for all!

To save what was lost, from heaven he came;
Come, sinners, and trust In Jesus's name.
He offers you pardon; He bids you be free;
"If sin be your burden, O come unto me!"

O let me commend My Saviour to you,
The publican's friend And Advocate too,
For you he is pleading His merits and death,
With God interceding for sinners beneath.

Then let us submit His grace to receive,
Fall down at his feet And gladly believe:
We all are forgiven For Jesus's sake:
Our title to heaven His merits we take.

Nail scarred hands
Crucified, left to die
That first Good Friday.

Dying for you and me
His separation from the Father
Love pierced him through

Blood running like water
Pouring out new life
He paid the price.

No end to this story.
Rising again in glory
And death itself, died.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

John Newton

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear?
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis Manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear name! The rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding-place;
My never-failing Treas'ry filled
With boundless stores of grace.

By thee my prayers acceptance gain
Although with sin defiled,
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

Wrestling at Peniel

Alyssa Underwood

It's at the point of desperation that the soul finds its deepest desire,
and in that desire lies everything of which true life is made.
Perhaps the first and central question concerning surrender
ought not to be, "What am I willing to give to God?"
but "What am I willing to receive from Him?"

For it's only in the realization that I have nothing to give Him and
He has everything to give me that true humility and surrender come.
If I would simply receive all He offers me and let Him fill me up
I would have no room in my hands to hold onto anything else.
But how often it is that we won't receive it until everything else is
lost.

It's the secret and inexpressible dreams of the soul
which are the hardest things of all to let go and the last to go.
When they are finally gone we have nothing left to run to but Him,
and when we do we find that He is the beginning,

the end and the center of every secret dream.

Ah, blessed Peniel—that mysterious and holy ground
where heartache collides head-on with romance,
that deep and shadowed land where we struggle
with God and with men and we overcome,
that painful yet glorious place which we may leave limping
with a wrenched hip but we do not care, for we have seen God's
face—
like Jacob, may we not pass you by without being forever changed.

The Healer

George MacDonald

They come to thee, the halt, the maimed, the blind,
The devil-torn, the sick, the sore;
Thy heart their well of life they find,
Thine ear their open door.

Ah, who can tell the joy in Palestine-
What smiles and tears of rescued throngs!
Their lees of life were turned to wine,
Their prayers to shouts and songs!

The story dear our wise men fable call,
Give paltry facts the mighty range;
To me it seems just what should fall,
And nothing very strange.

But were I deaf and lame and blind and sore,
I scarce would care for cure to ask;
Another prayer should haunt thy door-
Set thee a harder task.

If thou art Christ, see here this heart of mine,

Torn, empty, moaning, and unblest!
Had ever heart more need of thine,
If thine indeed hath rest?

Thy word, thy hand right soon did scare the bane
That in their bodies death did breed;
If thou canst cure my deeper pain
Then art thou lord indeed.

Heavenly Call

Lovely Ybanez

When the past becomes a burden on you.
You became stuck in the middle of nowhere
purpose becomes empty and many,
heart was weary,
faith was clashing

the moment you woke up is nothing but physical pain all over your
body
don't you worry everything will come to an end.
You're world isn't as simple as the way you expect it
but it will be all worth it.

Let your mind be your own enemy
Your heart be your best friend
and lastly..
your faith be your strong refuge
Fix your eyes unto Jesus

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received and pass
on the love that has been given to you....
May you be content knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones and allow
your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

Shoreline rocks, immovable stone
Buffeted by waves, lashed with rain
Seen ages passed, watching silently
As men stand upon you with cries to heaven
A firm foundation against life's storms
A place of solitude, contemplating life's calm

The Rock of Ages forever unchanged
Perfect in love, full of light
Comes down to earth, Love incarnate
Eternal God steadfast and true
A firm foundation against life's storms
A place of solitude, contemplating life's calm

Give Me Strength

Ludwig van Beethoven

Oh God give me strength to be victorious over myself,
for nothing may chain me to this life.
O guide my spirit, O raise me from these dark depths,
that my soul, transported through thy wisdom,
may fearlessly struggle upward in fiery flight.
For thou alone understandest and canst inspire me.

Atonement

Jane Blanchard

The thorn-pricked brow, the spear-pierced side,
The hammered hands and feet,
The swollen tongue, the broken heart,
The sacrifice complete—

So Christ did die upon the cross,
And in the tomb was placed;
But then He rose for you and me,
So blessed to be so graced.

Almighty Maker of my frame!

Anne Steele

Almighty Maker of my frame!
Teach me the measure of my days,
Teach me to know how frail I am,
And spend the remnant in Thy praise.

My days are shorter than a span,
A little point my life appears;

How frail at best is dying man!
How vain are all his hopes and fears!

Vain his ambition, noise and show;
Vain are the cares which rack his mind;
He heaps up treasures mixed with woe,
And dies and leaves them all behind.

O be a nobler portion mine!
My God, I bow before Thy throne;
Earth's fleeting treasures I resign,
And fix my hope on Thee alone.

Warrior's Prayer

Cindy Norton

Lord I bow down upon my knees.
Asking you to please set me free,
Untie the chains that bind my soul.
Lift me up, make me whole.
Flood my spirit with your love.
Give my heart wings of a dove.
Unsure of what my future brings.
My hope now soars on Holy wings.
Willing to walk through life's fire,
Praising my Lord and lifting Him higher.
Keep my eyes upon you, Oh Lord,
Will my hands to use your sword.

Lord , it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long I will be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short—yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that unto God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.

Come, Lord , when grace has made me meet
Thy blessèd face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be!

Then I shall end my sad complaints,
And weary, sinful days;
And join with the triumphant saints,
To sing Jehovah 's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.

When I chase after you
it's like I'm on my red speedster bicycle
and you,
you are driving a car
and while some of the time
you are this dot
in the distance
most of the time
you are near enough
that I can make out the make
and model of the vehicle you drive
but the moments I live for
are when the sidewalk slopes down
and I see that early enough that I rush my legs forward
and around
over and over again
so that once I hit that downward slope
I can stop pedalling
and focus
on turning to the left
and seeing that for these few seconds
you and I
are right next to each other
and that is when you remind me
I was made in secret
and curiously woven
in the low places
I now speed towards
with you so near
that my reflection is made red and shiny
in the door of your car.

There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers;
Death like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green:
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross this narrow sea,
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

Oh could we make our doubts remove,
These gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love,
With unclouded eyes;

Could we but climb where Moses stood
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.

Fastidiously do we assemble
those things that matter most -
to us.

Sometimes we pause to ponder,
but take the time to boast -
that's us.

But lest we find our fate
hid beneath a pile too high to breach,
by us,
We search so hard for answers
yet unfound because they're out of reach
for us.

There are the sad effects
and many things beyond the understanding
of us.
When purposes provide solutions
for all the featured facts outstanding,
from us.

It's what we should be seeking,
and the thought that should be ever new
with us.
It's what we cannot see,
to never overlook what only God can do,
for us.

Rescue the perishing; care for the dying.
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep o'er the erring one; lift up the fallen.
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.
Refrain
Rescue the perishing; care for the dying.
Jesus is merciful; Jesus will save!
Tho' they are slighting Him, still He is waiting;
Waiting the penitent child to receive.
Plead with them earnestly; plead with them gently.
He will forgive if they only believe.
Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Cords that are broken will vibrate once more.
Rescue the perishing; duty demands it.
Strength for your labor the Lord will provide.
Back to the narrow way patiently win them,
Tell the poor wanderer a Savior has died.

Beloved one
I rejoice over you with singing in my heart
When I look at you my heart leaps for joy
You are my delight
My precious child
There is no good thing I will withhold from you
Trust me
Walk with me
Dance with me

I am yours and you are mine
Bought at a price
Precious blood shed on a cross
My love poured out for all mankind
Poured out for you
My heart is always yearning for you
Come away with me, my beloved
Rest in my warm embrace
I passionately want the very best for you
You are my precious diamond
Honed and shining bright
Stay in this place of rest
This place of love
And together we will pour out my love to others
Remain in my love
Come and rest here

One holy Church of God appears**Samuel Longfellow**

One holy Church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place.

From oldest time, on farthest shores,
Beneath the pine or palm,
One unseen Presence she adores,
With silence, or with psalm.

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errands swift
Do make her pilgrimage.

O living Church, thine errand speed,
Fulfil thy task sublime;
With Bread of life earth's hungers feed;
Redeem the evil time

Ancient

Ethan Hardin

You are the ancient and we are just waiting
With imperfect patience, the shape of us changing
You move in the silence of shifting tectonics
You move in the violence, earthquakes you bring on us

This is the way that you move

We are like mountains staring at your stars
Feeling young by comparison but you know who we are
We are just grains insignificant in their own
But in labor pains you are sculpting your own image

This is the way that you move / We are earth that you move

You turn the ground into tall mountain ranges
Eternal and bound in mysterious graces
You are the epicenter of our worth
You slowly but boldly duress us: the rebirth

Like mountains you raise from desolate wasteland
We sing of your praise in grace of your highlands

This is the way that you move us

From falsehood and error,
From darkness and terror,
From all that is evil,
From the power of the devil,
From the fire and the doom,
From the judgement to come-
Sweet Jesu, deliver
Thy servants for ever.

(Inspired by the Ancient Hebrew Conception of the Universe)

Just your touch would yield the most distant glimpse:
you read letters dotted Braille in the stars,
vast dimensions curled in your fingerprints.

You said the sky's night spread ever so far,
an ink wall 'round Earth that most dared not see.
You read letters dotted Braille in the stars

and looked at starlight-chinks as holes for keys
to the fence of heaven you know shines through
an ink wall 'round Earth that most dare not see.

Not my face but the moon's was your last view
each eve as sleep sank and your dreams travelled
to the fence of heaven you know shines through.

At your feet have tight secrets unravelled.
Vast dimensions curled in your fingerprints
show space's stage with a pull of Earth's tassel,
for just your touch yields a most distant glimpse.

Our lips can only stammer, yet we chant
High things of God. We do not hope to praise
The splendour and the glory of his ways,
Nor light up Heaven with our low descant:
But we will follow thee, his hierophant
Filling with secret canticles the days
To shadow forth in symbols for their gaze
What crowns and thrones await his militant.

For all his beauty showered on the earth
Is summed in thee, O thou most perfect flower;
His dew has filled thy chalice, and his power
Blows forth the fragrance of thy mystic worth:
White blossom of his Tree, behold the hour!
Fear not! thy fruit is Love's most lovely birth.

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the face I wear
for I wear a mask, a thousand masks,
masks that I'm afraid to take off,
and none of them is me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me,
but don't be fooled,
for God's sake don't be fooled.
I give you the impression that I'm secure,
that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without,
that confidence is my name and coolness my game,
that the water's calm and I'm in command

and that I need no one,
but don't believe me.
My surface may seem smooth but my surface is my mask,
ever-varying and ever-concealing.
Beneath lies no complacency.
Beneath lies confusion, and fear, and aloneness.
But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weakness exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
a nonchalant sophisticated facade,
to help me pretend,
to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only hope,
and I know it.
That is, if it's followed by acceptance,
if it's followed by love.
It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself,
from my own self-built prison walls,
from the barriers I so painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me
of what I can't assure myself,
that I'm really worth something.
But I don't tell you this. I don't dare to, I'm afraid to.
I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance,
will not be followed by love.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me,
that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.
I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing
and that you will see this and reject me.

So I play my game, my desperate pretending game,
with a facade of assurance without
and a trembling child within.
So begins the glittering but empty parade of masks,
and my life becomes a front.
I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk.

I tell you everything that's really nothing,
and nothing of what's everything,
of what's crying within me.
So when I'm going through my routine
do not be fooled by what I'm saying.
Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying,
what I'd like to be able to say,
what for survival I need to say,
but what I can't say.

I don't like hiding.
I don't like playing superficial phony games.
I want to stop playing them.
I want to be genuine and spontaneous and me
but you've got to help me.
You've got to hold out your hand
even when that's the last thing I seem to want.
Only you can wipe away from my eyes
the blank stare of the breathing dead.
Only you can call me into aliveness.
Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging,
each time you try to understand because you really care,
my heart begins to grow wings--
very small wings,
very feeble wings,
but wings!

With your power to touch me into feeling
you can breathe life into me.
I want you to know that.
I want you to know how important you are to me,
how you can be a creator--an honest-to-God creator--
of the person that is me
if you choose to.
You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble,
you alone can remove my mask,
you alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic,

from my lonely prison,
if you choose to.
Please choose to.

Do not pass me by.
It will not be easy for you.
A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.
The nearer you approach to me the blinder I may strike back.
It's irrational, but despite what the books say about man
often I am irrational.
I fight against the very thing I cry out for.
But I am told that love is stronger than strong walls
and in this lies my hope.
Please try to beat down those walls
with firm hands but with gentle hands
for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder?
I am someone you know very well.
For I am every man you meet
and I am every woman you meet.

Arise, my soul, arise

Charles Wesley

Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears:
Before the throne my surety stands,
My name is written on His hands.
He ever lives above, for me to intercede;
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead:
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.
Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me:

“Forgive him, O forgive,” they cry,
“Nor let that ransomed sinner die!”
The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away, the presence of His Son;
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.
My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And “Father, Abba, Father,” cry.

This must be the Love

Nelize van Driel

I'll follow You until the end
for 'tis this broken heart You mend
for 'tis Your broken body,
now my bread

in the moment where You bled
into this wine glass You commend
communion to us,
to You my Friend

death will never have us part
'tis known from the start

His nails driven for us
His wails cried for us
this must be the Love
'tis my soul that Thee do love.

None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other hope in Heav'n or earth or sea,
None other hiding place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee!

My faith burns low, my hope burns low;
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life, though I be dead;
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be:
Nor Heav'n have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee.

Each day I wake, I thank and praise my Lord;
The One Who loves me so, who makes me whole,
and who forgives my sin.

Each day I try to honor Him and laud
His holy name. Extol, exalt The One,
For He forgives my sin.

Each day I strive to share His sacred news;
The Great I am, Supreme Being, Divine,
cause He forgives my sin.

Each day I thank His agony - where HE
endured the cross. The cross at Calvary
then He forgave my sin.

O God of earth and altar,
Bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us,
The swords of scorn divide,
Take not thy thunder from us,
But take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches,
From lies of tongue and pen,
From all the easy speeches
That comfort cruel men,
From sale and profanation
Of honour and the sword,
From sleep and from damnation,
Deliver us, good Lord.

Tie in a living tether
The prince and priest and thrall,
Bind all our lives together,
Smite us and save us all;
In ire and exultation
Aflame with faith, and free,
Lift up a living nation,
A single sword to thee.

Perfect Blue Crazy Sky
Perfect You Crazy Creator
Powdered
green leftovers
Covered
icy paths
with white useless beauty
making brown dry
sticks-and-stones
look luxuriously elegant
Illustrating perfection
Peacefully sovereign
Whispering
Can't you see, My Love,
can't you see.
Everything,
everything,
will be
beautifully covered,
with just me.

And the sky above,
perfectly blue,
is blazing
crazy love,
crazy mercy,
crazy peace.

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

"I made it!" exclaims my haggard soul Elated, expectant, exhausted
The door slams shut upon my cares Barricaded with lock and heavy chair

You shall find me in the stillness Seek, and ye shall find

Knock, and the door shall be opened to you

Knees digging into ragged carpet I summon weak memories

"Pray! I must pray!" insists my mind Tired, impatient, distracted

You shall find me in the stillness Seek, and ye shall find

Knock, and the door shall be opened to you

"Thanks, I guess," mutter my clumsy lips Unaccustomed now to gratitude

Fear and anxiety fill my heart

As little feet approach my refuge

You shall find me in the stillness Seek, and ye shall find

Knock, and the door shall be opened to you

Tears streaming, dripping from my chin I throw myself into waiting arms

"Carry me! Carry me!" I cry softly

Forehead pressed against moistened floor

You shall find me in the stillness Seek, and ye shall find

Knock, and the door shall be opened to you

"Amen, amen," releases my soul Back aching, feet burning

Standing again, unbarring the door

I have peace inside for another go

From my lips in their defilement,
From my heart in its beguilement,
From my tongue which speaks not fair,
From my soul stained everywhere,

O my Jesus, take my prayer!
Spurn me not for all it says,
Not for words and not for ways,
Not for shamelessness endued!
Make me brave to speak my mood,
O my Jesus, as I would!
Or teach me, which I rather seek,
What to do and what to speak.

I have sinned more than she,
Who learning where to meet with Thee,
And bringing myrrh, the highest-priced,
Anointed bravely, from her knee,
Thy blessed feet accordingly,
My God, my Lord, my Christ!
As Thou saidest not 'Depart'
To that suppliant from her heart,
Scorn me not, O Word, that art
The gentlest one of all words said!
But give Thy feet to me instead
That tenderly I may them kiss
And clasp them close, and never miss
With over-dropping tears, as free
And precious as that myrrh could be,
T'anoint them bravely from my knee!
Wash me with Thy tears: draw nigh me,
That their salt may purify me.
Thou remit my sins who knowest
All the sinning to the lowest --
Knowest all my wounds, and seest
All the stripes Thyself decreest;
Yea, but knowest all my faith,

How deeply blessed that I should be
Receiving of His grace
Through blood spilled forth on Calvary
As Jesus took my place
My sin, oh the shame to know
That I helped put Him there
And yet He chose to die for me
My burden, gladly bear

The whips which scourged His battered frame
Each blow was meant for me
The mocking words of scorners
For they refused to see
The heavy blows which nailed Him to
The cross on which He died
The pouring out of selfless love
For thieves on either side

Forgiveness that he asked for those
Who knew not what they did
His friends who left Him all alone
As in their fear, they hid
The crown of thorns so cruelly shoved
Upon his bloodied head
The burden of the heavy cross
To Golgotha, He was led

The taunting of the soldiers
As blinded, He was struck
"Prophecy who hit you,
Son of God," they mocked
His mother, there before Him
To see her baby die
Not knowing that His sacrifice

Would save you and I

The anguished cry which was wrenched forth
As God turned His face away
The Son hung on that cross alone
Once pure, the Lamb now stain'd
Broken heart, the price He paid
Forsaken and forlorn
The crushing weight of all our sins
Its torment freely borne

"It is finished," was His final cry
As on the cross He died
The Lamb of God who took our place
The final sacrifice

And then, cacophony of sound
As nature mourned His loss
The crashing noise of thunder
And 'quakes as land was toss'd
The darkness as the sun was hid
As howling winds did roar
The temple veil was torn in two
The barrier is no more

In grief, His loved ones mourned His loss
They did not comprehend
That on the third day after death
The Son would rise again
In glorious and triumphant strength
The keys of Hell He claimed
Death no longer has the pow'r
It will not be regained

And now He sits at God's right hand
His blood a veil for me
As God the Father looks at my soul

The blood alone He sees

The sacrifice upon the cross
The shame of mortal form
This love is overwhelming
My sins, my Savior bore

Here is love, vast as the ocean William Rees/William Williams

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving-kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And heav'n's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Let me, all Thy love accepting,
Love Thee, ever all my days;
Let me seek Thy kingdom only,
And my life be to Thy praise;
Thou alone shalt be my glory,
Nothing in the world I see;
Thou hast cleansed and sanctified me,
Thou Thyself hast set me free.

In Thy truth Thou dost direct me
By Thy Spirit through Thy Word;
And Thy grace my need is meeting,
As I trust in Thee, my Lord.
Of Thy fullness Thou art pouring
Thy great love and pow'r on me,
Without measure, full and boundless,
Drawing out my heart to Thee.

My streams. ..in your desert

Cynthia Jean

Your gravest danger
giving up
ceasing to believe
I can still do
wondrous things
in your world.

Keep moving forward
depending on Me
trusting
expecting a path
to open before you.

Refreshingly new

Behold
I will do a new thing

I am making a way
a way in the desert
and streams
in the wasteland.

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who biddest the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!
O Christ! Whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy Word,
Who walked on the foaming deep,
And calm amidst its rage didst sleep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!
Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its angry tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!
O Trinity of love and power!
Our family shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect us wheresoever we go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Here, in the perfection of your presence
My prison of pain seems dim and distant.
Here, in the beauty of your holiness
Worldly wounds don't seem to matter

As a poultice of praise eases ailments
And pushes problems to the periphery
I try to forget my anger and rage;
The injustice, injury and tears.

Here, I hear your voice
An insistent whisper calling me ever closer
Saying, 'Come my love'
'Bring your burdens, your wounds and your worries.'

Here, heaven touches earth
And grace gravitates me towards you.
Created to creator; Wounded to healer; Child to Father.

Here, hurt finds healer,
Sin finds redeemer.
I find the problems I tried to leave on the outside
Here, in the bright light of your love

Let boundaries blur
The here and there dissolve
Let problems resolve
May the presence of God be found in the pain
Felt in the flames
May the healer set us free.

Before the Beginning

Christina Rossetti

Before the beginning Thou hast foreknown the end,
Before the birthday the death-bed was seen of Thee:
Cleanse what I cannot cleanse, mend what I cannot mend,
O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me.

While the end is drawing near I know not mine end;
Birth I recall not, my death I cannot foresee:
O God, arise to defend, arise to befriend,
O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me

Within the Shelter

Doreen Mellor

Based on Psalm 91

Where shall I hide?
Where can abide?
Where can I rest?
Next to the breast?

I know a place
Escape the chase
Shelter from storms
Shadow from harm.

He covers me
Protector be
Wraps me up in
Security.

When calling Him,
He answers me.
This parent knows
I am His own.

When trouble comes
He will be there
Rescue, honour
Beyond compare.

I choose to dwell
Within His love
I choose to stay
Shadow'd from above.

I choose to trust
His loving care
He is my own
My Most High God.

During his Courtship

Charles Wesley

Christ, my Life, my Only Treasure,
Thou alone
Mould thine own,
After thy Good pleasure.

Thou, who paidst my Price, direct me!
Thine I am,
Holy Lamb,
Save, and always save me.

Order Thou my whole Condition,
Chuse my State,
Fix my Fate
By thy wise Decision.

From all Earthly Expectation
Set me free,
Seize for Thee
All my Strength of Passion.

Into absolute Subjection
Be it brought,

Every Thought,
Every fond Affection.

That which most my Soul requires
For thy sake
Hold it back
Purge my Best Desires.

Keep from me thy loveliest Creature,
Till I prove
Jesus' Love
Infinitely sweeter;

Till with purest Passion panting
Cries my Heart
'Where Thou art
Nothing more is wanting.'

Blest with thine Abiding Spirit,
Fully blest
Now I rest,
All in Thee inherit
Heaven is now with Jesus given;
Christ in me,
Thou shalt be
Mine Eternal Heaven.

To Truth

Anna Angell

Look at a life emptied of truth.
Look at a young one emptied of youth
Or a strong conviction emptied of proof.

Carrier-bag body and scrap paper soul
Witlessly whipped up and rolled
By each whisper of wind that blusters by;
Demanding, commanding control.

Shifting and shuddering,
Placeless and peaceless,
Hard to fix eyes on –
Without truth,
A life without hope or horizon.

But how that wily white-lie lies,
Flashing pale and pretty eyes,
To make us forget truth's touch and scent,
As bit by bit the facts are bent to fit our darker whims;
And so it begins...

And unperceived we wander on
And truth's last pale flicker's gone
And in heavy dark we stand alone.

Do not settle for this busying and dizzying half life.
No, no, no!
We were made for eagle flights;
Mastery of airflow, to absorb truth like rain and grow!

We were made for truth,
All fashioned to be filled with and fuelled by truth.
And if pulled apart from truth
We stand to lose track of our very selves.

As empty shelves or hollow shells,
The noise coming back just distorts that which enters.
Like soulless, sparkless towns without centres
Or silently swinging noiseless bells.

And the heavenly ear leans hard to hear
The honest shouts of teeth-gritted, indignant, foul-mouthed fear;
Far sweeter is that ugly sound
Than tick-box, truthless, trifling rounds
Of thinly disguised pride and pretence.

For truth does not fear truth
And far greater is the use
Of an honest heart and upturned bloodied hands,
Than a thousand well presented plans.

And deeper than mere common sense
A truthful life which risks the tense and terse,
Will always in the end unearth
The treasure in the ground beneath.

So bring honest praise through gritted teeth
And shout your way through bitterest grief.
For the very last thing from which a soul should part
Is an honest call to heaven's heart.

In truth alone can Truth himself
Reveal and heal and slip by stealth
The slow and gradual grains of grace,
Which grow within our darkest place.

To truth to truth, oh let me fly;
For without truth, then nought am I.

Christ's Restraint

Richard Chenevix Trench

He might have reared a palace at a word,
Who sometimes had not where to lay his head:
Time was, and He who nourished crowds with bread

Would not one meal unto Himself afford:
Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at his beck, the scorned and buffeted:
He healed another's scratch, his own side bled,
Side, feet, and hands, with cruel piercings gored.
Oh wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought;
Oh self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none;
Oh self-denying Love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own!

The First Pentecost

Linna Monteath

One minute we were standing there frightened and confused.
Then there was Ruach - wind, breath, pushing through us
Changing the texture of our bodies;
And tongues of flame, light, enlightening
Changing the character of our spirit.
We should have been more worried
Earth, Wind and Fire - not a good combination
Lethal you might say
And yet, somehow we were lifted out of fear
We were transformed
We could put words together, reveal what we had discovered,
What we had been shown
We could pass on the Gospel, The Good News:
Your Life is in the hands of One Who Cares
Your Spirit is Eternal
You are Saved
Whoever you are, whatever you have done
You are Loved and Trusted
And so you can Love and Trust.
Swept up by the convection of conviction

We too could transform lives
Even unto our own martyrdom.

Our lives are already combustible, golden, glowing
We know the path we are set on
We know our destiny
The birth of the Christian Church is in our hands...

I am Father**Saint John Chrysostom**

I am Father, I am brother, I am bridegroom,
I am dwelling place, I am food, I am raiment,
I am root, I am foundation, all whatsoever thou wilt, I am.
Be thou in need of nothing, I will be even a servant, for
I came to minister, not to be ministered unto; I am friend,
and member, and head, and brother, and sister, and mother;
I am all; only cling thou closely. To me.
I was poor for thee, and a wanderer for thee, on the cross for thee,
in the tomb for thee, above I intercede for thee to the Father;
on earth I am come for thy sake am ambassador from my Father.
Thou art all things to me, brother, and joint heir, and friend, and
member.
What wouldst thou more?

The God Who Created The Cosmos**Trevor Thorn**

I imagine the God who created the cosmos
as a Spirit, eternally young;
full of light, full of love, full of energy
from whose Word every particle spun,
to be shaped and reshaped through existence

with some to emerge into life
at first simple, then complex, then sentient
bringing love and its dark converse, strife.

This same God, out of deepest compassion,
set power and glory aside,
became human , risked wrath and malevolence
to redeem us from sin's drowning tide.

Oh, Thou before whose radiant shrine Felicia Dorothea Hemans

Oh, Thou! before whose radiant shrine,
Entranc'd, adoring seraphs bend;
Eternal source of light divine!
Wilt Thou thy hallow'd ear incline!
And mortal pray'r attend?
Yes, Father! yes, benignant Pow'r!
Around Thee beams fair Mercy's purest ray;
No awful terrors round Thee low'r,
Save when, in Judgment's dreaded hour,
Thou bidst Creation tremble and obey!

Then, rob'd in darkness and in clouds,
That solemn veil thy glory shrouds;
Chaos and night thy dark pavilion form;
Thy spirit on the whirlwind rides,
Impels the unresisting tides,
Glares in the lightning, rushes in the storm!

But Thou wilt meet the suppliant eye,
And Thou wilt mark the lowly sigh;
And Thou the holy tear wilt see,
Which penitence devotes to Thee;
That sigh thy breezes waft to heav'n,

That holy tear is grateful incense giv'n
Low, humble, sad, to Thee I bend,
Oh! listen from thy blest abode!
And though celestial hymns ascend,
Oh! deign a mortal's prayer attend,
My Father and my GOD!

Teach me if hope, if joy, be mine,
To bless thy bounteous hand divine;
And still, with trembling homage, raise
The grateful pæan of exalted praise!

When deep affliction wounds my soul,
Still let me own thy mild control;
Teach me, submissive and resign'd,
To calm the tempest of the mind;
To lift the meek, adoring eye,
Suppress the tear and hush the sigh;
Gaze on one bright, unclouded star,
And hail 'the day-spring' from afar,
Bid angel-faith dispel surrounding gloom,
And soar, on cherub-wing—beyond the tomb.

New Tricks

Sally Clark

Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all
his might - 2 Samuel 6:14

The old dog's once clear eyes,
now filled with his clouded destiny;
his aged body quickening towards
the familiar voice he cannot see,
rippling with quiet joy
that Love has called him,
once again;

his head nodding heavily
with reciprocated desire.

What joy should fill
God's waiting heart,
if from such trusting pets,
we humans could learn
not to ponder our worthiness
to be loved,
but chose instead the uninhibited,
slobbering joy of a lesser creature
anticipating the affection
of his Master.

Immortal Love, Forever Full

John Greenleaf Whittier

Immortal love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away:
Shine out, O Light divine, and show
How wide and far we stray.

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,

For Him no depths can drown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet,
A present help is He;
And faith still has its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His Name.

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

The letter fails, the systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over brooding all,
Eternal Love remains

Where is God?

Carmen VonTickner

In the early evening,
As the sun begins to yawn
My son and I kneel
to give thanks for this day

"Where is God?" he asks,
"Does he listen to my prayer?"
"Does he watch me all day long?"
"Is he big and strong like daddy?"

A quiet moment to form my thoughts,
As my heart bursts with pride
A child of five is reaching out
To learn the teachings of our Lord

Proud and humble I take his hands
Share a smile, and bow my head
"You are a child of God," I say
"And He listens to all your prayers"

"God is everywhere, as God is all."
"God is Life, Love, and Spirit.
and is with us day and night."
"God is our Light and our Salvation
of whom shall we fear, my dear?"

Father of all! In every age

Alexander Pope

In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confin'd
To know but this, that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind:

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;

And, binding Nature fast in Fate,
Left free the human Will.

What Conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do;
This teach me more than Hell to shun,
That more than Heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives;
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And teach damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish Pride
Or impious Discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught that goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To right the fault I see:
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by thy breath;
O lead me whereso'er I go,
Thro' this day's life or death!

This day be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun
Though know'st if best bestow'd or not,
And let Thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is of Space,
Whose altar earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all Beings raise!
All Nature's incense rise!

Forever

Jaco Mostert

Show me your hands my Lord
Sign me a language of grace
Through those holes you birthed a nation
Every bruise a carved name
In the palm of your salvation
You a living portrait
Nailed against the walls of time
Forever
As you break bread for us the word by your hands
Sever
And conduct music
In the darkest core of my inner ear
And a private silence grips me
Moves me into your presence
Where only your breath lingers
I am your blood rose

I have been carved into you
I am the healed hole in your hands

The Divine Image

William Blake

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every dime
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too

Serenity is the sound of kingdom come
The sky gets deeper on the shores of home
The beauty that steals our words is your own
You have pushed us into higher places than we have ever known

At the crest of us
You are the infinite
And the rest for us
You are magnificent
You are all we know in your highlands

In the blue black of thin air we lose our breath
Never closer to the world that knows no death
We can hear your deafening silence so clearly
You have raised us as your majesty to shape us so dearly in your
image

At the crest of us
You are the infinite
And the rest for us
You are magnificent
You are all we know in your highlands

At the summit we are one in peace
Where the heavens kiss the peaks an unending stillness speaks
The pains of ascension fade, look at what you made

You are our highlands

O Lord, the children of my people are Thy peculiar treasures,
Make them mine, O God, even while I have them,
My lovely companions, like Eve in Eden!
So much my treasure that all other wealth is without them
But dross and poverty.
Do they not adorn and beautify the World,
And gratify my Soul which hateth Solitude?
Thou, Lord, hast made Thy servant a sociable creature,
For which I praise Thy name;
A lover of company, a delighter in equals;
Replenish the inclination which Thyself hath implanted,
And give me eyes
To see the beauty of that life and comfort
Wherewith those by their actions
Inspire the nations.
Their Markets, Tillage, Courts of Judicature, Marriages, Feasts and
Assemblies, Navies Armies, Priests and Sabbaths, Trades and
Business, the voice of the Bridegroom, Musical Instruments, the light
of Candles, and the grinding of Mills
Are comfortable. O Lord, let them not cease.
The riches of the land are all the materials of my felicity in their
hands:
They are my Factors, Substitutes, and Stewards;
Second Selves, who by Trade and Business animate my wealth,
Which else would be dead and rust in my hands;
But when I consider, O Lord, how they come unto Thy temples, fill
Thy Courts, and sing Thy praises,
O how wonderful they then appear!
What Stars,
Enflaming Suns,
Enlarging Seas
Of Divine Affection,
Confirming Patterns,
Infusing Influence,

Do I feel in these!
Who are the shining light
Of all the land (to my very soul):
Wings and Streams
Carrying me unto Thee,
The Sea of Goodness from whence they came.

Celtica Digitas

Marion MacGregor White

From lower case to Upper case – English and Gaelic

You Are
I am
But because
You Are
I Am
Too
I Am
Within
And I Am
Without
Me and You as One.

Is Tusa
Is mise
Ach o chionns g'eil
Is Tusa
Is Mise
Cuideachd
Is Mise
Taobh a staigh
Agus is Mise
Taobh a muigh
Mise is Tusa mar Aon

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
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Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner

Lord, upon my knees I am prone,
I bow down under your feet.
Father from your royal throne,
You hear my every need.

I present my heart tarnished as it is,
Unworthy am I to be here now,
But Lord, I accept who Jesus is.
The Son of God came to save us now.
My spirit humbly submits,
A ledger of my offense.
My sinful nature I admit,
While, Jesus stands in my defence.
The gift of life Christ did give.
Through His hands with their holes,
The Lord is able to freely forgive.
Adopting me into His family fold.
Lord, upon my knees I am prone.
My spirit humbly submits,
I bow down before your royal throne,
My needs to you I commit.
Worthy are you, Lord, to be praised.
Holy Spirit, you fill my heart,
You delight in all my days,
With a love that will never depart.
You search my heart and know,
All my treasured dreams,
My secret desires hidden below,
I surrender these parts of me!
Lord, I bow down in awe of you,
Wonderful are your plans.
Your ways are righteous and true,
You desire us to pray through the land.
Your presence upon the breeze,
Your scent is in the air.
It lifts my spirit within me,
Willingly your cross I'll bear.
The Holy Spirit's gentle touch,
Christ's unconditional love.
The Lord's love endures much,
Descending upon me like a dove.
Now free to dance within the royal halls.

Your divine peace floods my soul.
I now embrace the Lord's call,
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing

Robert Robinson

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

Sorrowing I shall be in spirit,
Till released from flesh and sin,
Yet from what I do inherit,
Here Thy praises I'll begin;
Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Here by Thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood;
How His kindness yet pursues me
Mortal tongue can never tell,
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me
I cannot proclaim it well.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

On Hunger

Kelsey Lynn Sivertson

I was told I was born to be brutal
painstaking steps into fists
locked out of my home
for being too soft
too mushy
too impractical with the harvest
too messy with my chores
too loving to the things that didn't love me

See I thought if I could love something
that hated me
I could somehow grasp onto a deeper fountain
I could somehow hold in a larger well
where the water tastes different

because maybe it doesn't just satisfy
it also sparks a longing
for that unknown space under my bed
where I keep all the secrets
I'm too scared to utter
because what if no one ever tells me an answer
what if when the end comes
all I have
is the mystery in those questions
even though
I climbed every hill
I fought every battle
and I surrendered when you told me to.

What does victory mean when half
of my body is burned
past the point of recognition
what happens after the ceremony when
I go home and look in the mirror
and I don't recognize the person staring back at me

So now
I pace worn holes into the carpet
checking the clock every ten seconds
hoping
when I check again
the world will have rotated fast enough for
time
to catch up to my longing
and then
while the skin on my body burned
I could reach out
and find something holding me
that reminded me exactly how
to inhale and exhale
and then
fall

into something I never needed to understand to possess

See my God has made home in my hunger
landscape and sky and
rough uneven patches
need no work of my hands
My God in his glory
levels all in due time.

Footnote:

To He who leaves
open spaces to breathe
maintaining oxygen and love
to He who became the mountain
that overcame the mountain
you have loved me for a thousand years
more than that even,
I will find you again.

I dared not hope that Thou wouldst deign to come Edwin Hatch

I dared not hope that Thou wouldst deign to come
And make this lowly heart of mine Thy home,
That Thou wouldst deign, O King of kings, to be
E'en for one hour a sojourner in me;
Yet art Thou always here to help, and bless,
And lift the load of my great sinfulness.

I dared not ever hope for such a Guide
To walk with me my faltering steps beside,
To help me when I fall, and when I stray
Constrain me gently to the better way;
Yet art Thou always at my side to be

A Counsellor and a Comforter to me.

I do not always go where Thou dost lead,
I do not always Thy soft whispers heed;
I follow other lights, and, in my sin,
I vex with many a slight my Friend within:
Yet Thou dost not, though grieved, from me depart,
But guardest still Thy place within my heart.

Reflections in the wonderful morning

Briana B. Lamberson

of night & dark

I can hear the crickets singing
I can hear his chest breathing

The semblance of this late night air
my son's teething

I see the star beaming at me
(a soft joke between us);
We both know to Whom gave us form

The symphony of sounds unseen
mid the dark sky's shade

My temperament sound as
our environment quiets down

Me thinks on the Covenant of Old –
Archaic bound

Its temperatures ablaze
in the antiquated stillness of night

Much so its inhabitants slept
Amid cool rooftop heights

The Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs
knew stars
the appointed times fast approaching

The shofar sounds
The atonement is paid
As He tabernacles amongst us

Take me where I can see Your glory
(Father)
Forever and again

Until then
Make best I with the lot given me by Him.

Holy of Holies

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

'Elder father, though thine eyes
Shine with hoary mysteries,
Canst thou tell what in the heart
Of a cowslip blossom lies?

'Smaller than all lives that be,
Secret as the deepest sea,
Stands a little house of seeds,
Like an elfin's granary.

'Speller of the stones and weeds,
Skilled in Nature's crafts and creeds,
Tell me what is in the heart
Of the smallest of the seeds.'

'God Almighty, and with Him
Cherubim and Seraphim,
Filling all eternity—
Adonai Elohim.'

The Holy Spirit's Creed

Sheila Donald

I believe in the life giver,
risk taker, power maker,
shaker of souls, Holy Spirit.

I believe in the convictor, mixer,
maker of souls, one who controls,
breath and voice of God, Holy Spirit.

I believe in the present of the presence,
essence of life eternal, infernal,
burning power, Holy Spirit.

I believe in you, Holy Spirit,
help my unbelief and in the grief
of my doubts, renew me from inside out,
create and remake me, blessed Holy Spirit.

Eternal Father, who didst all create

Robert Bridges

Eternal Father, who didst all create,
In whom we live and to whose bosom move,
To all men be Thy name known which is Love,
Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.

Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state,
That here on earth Thou mayst as well approve
Our service as Thou ownest theirs above,
Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin,
Even as our anger soon is past and dead
Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
And in the vale of terror comforted.

Earthed (a Christmas poem)

Jeremy Williams

Ring a bell,
Call a parade,
Get this on the evening news.

Let everything on earth,
And beneath the earth and above it,
And everything in the sea too,
From the oak to the octopus,
Bees, bears, birds, buffalo, bacteria,
And human beings,
Take notice.

We have an announcement.

The waiting is over.
The gap is breached.

Tell the lame they will dance
And the blind they will see rainbows.
Tell the oppressed they will be free

and the poor they will be rich.
Tell the meek their earth is ready.

Tell darkness its days are numbered
And its minions to flee,
Tell the warmongers
That peace will overtake them
And cover their battletanks in dust.

Let the wind shake the forest,
And ripple praise across the grasslands.
Let the mountaintops sparkle with joy.
Your God is for you; your God is with you,
Let all creation sing his welcome.

But whisper it,
The baby is sleeping.

What powerful Spirit lives within!

Thomas Traherne

What powerful Spirit lives within!
What active Angel doth inhabit here!
What heavenly light inspires my skin,
Which doth so like a Deity appear!
A living Temple of all ages, I
Within me see
A Temple of Eternity!
All Kingdoms I descry
In me.

An inward Omnipresence here
Mysteriously like His within me stands,
Whose knowledge is a Sacred Sphere
That in itself at once includes all lands.

There is some Angel that within me can
Both talk and move,
And walk and fly and see and love,
A man on earth, a man
Above.

Dull walls of clay my Spirit leaves,
And in a foreign Kingdom doth appear,
This great Apostle it receives,
Admires His works and sees them, standing here,
Within myself from East to West I move
As if I were
At once a Cherubim and Sphere,
Or was at once above
And here.

The Soul's a messenger whereby
Within our inward Temple we may be
Even like the very Deity
In all the parts of His Eternity.
O live within and leave unwieldy dross!
Flesh is but clay!
O fly my Soul and haste away
To Jesus' Throne or Cross!
Obey!

Set Apart

Shirley Jean Davis

I had been wondering down the path
Leading to sure destruction
When I heard the good news of Jesus
And felt God's glorious unction

I listened on the edge of my seat

As the minister told the old, old story
Of peace and love gave to mankind
A free gift full of grace and glory

I felt a yearning in my soul
A great tugging at my heart calling
I knew I had to raise my hands
It felt like I was falling

A “glory!” issued from my lips
As I sang of Jesus’ wondrous love
I felt the Holy Spirit moving inside
Sent from God’s throne from above

I felt I was soaring to Heaven
Above with God’s angel choir
Set free from the chains of sin
My heart became full of blazing fire

A new song can I now sing
Deep down in my heart
Since I met my loving King
And have been set apart

The Saviour Speaks

Anon

Thou who createdst everything,
Sweet Father, heavenly King,
Hear me — I, thy Son, implore:
For Man this flesh and bone I bore.

Clear and bright my breast and side,
Blood over whiteness spilling wide,
Holes in my body crucified.

Stiff and stark my long arms rise,
Dimness and darkness cloud my eyes;
Like sculpted marble hang my thighs.

Red my feet with the flowing blood,
Holes in them washed through with that flood.
Mercy on Man's sins, Father on high!
Through all my wounds to thee I cry!

We Belong To You

Anudeep Manne

We were lost
We were in darkness
We were blind
We had no choice
Then Jesus came along...

He showed us light,
the light that shined,
shined so bright,
It gave us Hope.

He bore our sins on the cross,
He died for us to save us all.

By the power of Your love,
We've been redeemed from our sin.
You showed us grace and gave us Hope,
To remind us all, that We belong to You.

You light up the darkness
To show us, we are not alone,
You are the Saviour of sinners,

In glory, on Your throne.

We were lost
We are found
Though in sin, we are born,
We belong to You.
We've been redeemed from our sin.

I see his blood upon the rose

Joseph Mary Plunkett

I see his blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of his eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but his voice—and carved by his power
Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

Peace
is
flowing.
Like a river
within me.
Casting
every stone,
every lie,
into the sea.
Peace
is
flowing.
Like a river
within me.
And then
the waterfall of joy
meets the river
of peace
within.
And I realize I am complete in Him.

O, Let Thy sweet Spirit descend from above,
Our hearts melt in humble contrition and love,
Cemented together in one let us be,
Thou Rock of Salvation—united in thee!
Let angels' bright pinions, now hovering nigh,
Bear upward the tidings, while to thee I cry,
O, cleanse in that fountain of blood spilt for me,
Thou Rock of Salvation—and hide me in thee!

The tough, thorny path, faint and worn, we pursue,
Refresh with thy presence, our strength we renew
By those living waters that flow full and free
From the Rock of Salvation—rejoicing in thee!
Thou friend and Supporter when troubles appear,
Preserver from evil, temptation and fear,
O, now to thine arms for protection I'll flee,
Thou Rock of Salvation—O, hide me in thee!
Secure in thy bosom I fain would repose,
Where peace, like a river, unceasingly flows;
Thy beauty and glory beholding, I'd be,
Thou Rock of Salvation—enraptured in thee!
Thy judgments, O Lord, soon in wrath will descend,
O'erwhelming with terror, the tempest will rend;
But firm a foundation, sure refuge I see
In the Rock of Salvation—above, cleft for me!
With all the redeemed, my glad voice would I raise,
And join in the songs to Immanuel's praise;
That at thine appearing I numbered may be,
Thou Rock of Salvation—O, hide me in thee

The Bells Of Christmas

Nancy Julien Kopp

Keep Christmas in my heart, Lord.
Help me remember the love and joy
that Advent season brings each year.

Let me hear the bells of Christmas
long after the sacred day is done,
ring them loud, ring them clear.

I want to celebrate your birthday
each and every day, if only quietly.
Let me not forget the beloved tale.

If I spread the love of Christmas
all January, June and hot July,
will its message sound as dear?

Keep Christmas in my heart, Lord.
Ring the bells of Christmas softly,
hold them close so that I may hear.

When everyday cares and woes
push the Christmas story far away,
let the blessed bells bring it back again.

Keep Christmas in my heart, Lord.
I'll ring the chimes for those who've
not yet heard the message of the bells.

He lives! the great Redeemer lives!

Anne Steele

He lives! the great Redeemer lives!
What joy the blest assurance gives!
And now, before His Father, God,
Pleads the full merit of His blood,

Repeated crimes awake our fears,
And justice armed with frowns appears,
But in the Savior's lovely face
Sweet mercy smiles, and all is peace,

In every dark, distressful hour,
When sin and Satan join their power,
Let this dear hope repel the dart,
That Jesus bears us on His heart,

Great Advocate, almighty Friend!
On Him our humble hopes depend;
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads, and must prevail,

Fratres (Brothers)

Daniel Paul Gilbert

We stand across from each other,
strangers with nothing to share,
caught in the middle of the tension
between separation and belonging.
Two estranged nations poised for battle,
but with arms reaching out to embrace.
We have fallen to the earth wrestling,
with fists clenched and legs thrashing
in our efforts to subdue one another.
Our voices vie to be the loudest
but our words become commotion,
drowning out the surrounding world.
A flame flickers within but struggles to burn,
its light reduced to something of a dull hum.
We chase the unceasing storm in us,
riding the tumult instead of letting go.
We are together and at odds all at once,
trapped in an unsolvable dichotomy.

But we both share the same breath.
We breathe in and we breathe out,
our bodies filled by this elusive wind.
And although we may not perceive,
we experience and understand,
that we are in some way connected.
We are not disposable or worthless.
We are each precious works of art.

The same indefinable, ineffable spark.
ignites the beating of our hearts.
Beauty is formed within our being
and eternity is sown in our spirits.
So when our brothers are attacked
and their blood is heard crying out,
we are here to be their keepers,
we are given the power to unify,
steering away from confrontation
to protect and love each other.

Morning hymn

George MacDonald

O Lord of life, thy quickening voice
Awakes my morning song!
In gladsome words I would rejoice
That I to thee belong.

I see thy light, I feel thy wind;
The world, it is thy word;
Whatever wakes my heart and mind,
Thy presence is, my Lord.

The living soul which I call me
Doth love, and long to know;
It is a thought of living thee,
Nor forth of thee can go.

Therefore I choose my highest part,
And turn my face to thee;
Therefore I stir my inmost heart
To worship fervently.

Lord, let me live and will this day-
Keep rising from the dead;

Lord, make my spirit good and gay-
Give me my daily bread.

Within my heart, speak, Lord, speak on,
My heart alive to keep,
Till comes the night, and, labour done,
In thee I fall asleep.

Sing a New Song

Catherine Jarvis

I arise in the morning to
a soft gentle dawn
All to worship and praise You
and to sing a new song
The leaves lightly play
in the soft summer breeze
And the birds are awaking
in Your beautiful trees

All creation is stirring
and the darkness has passed
I gaze up at the sky
so blue and so vast
I gaze up in wonder
at Your pink rolling hills
And I feel Your presence
and ask for Your will

The sun rises up
in the palm of Your hand
And the light chases darkness
from the face of the land
I look 'round in great awe
and ask myself "why?"
O, why would You do this

for a wretch such as I?

Clouds scuttle over
the skies where You bid
And the fish in the water
go beneath and are hid
Vastly great is Your wisdom
so in part do we see...

I'll arise in the morning
You've given to me.

A Hymn to Christ

John Donne

In what torn ship so ever I embark,
That ship shall be my emblem of Thy ark ;
What sea soever swallow me, that flood
Shall be to me an emblem of Thy blood ;
Though Thou with clouds of anger do disguise
Thy face, yet through that mask I know those eyes,
Which, though they turn away sometimes,
They never will despise.

I sacrifice this island unto Thee,
And all whom I love there, and who loved me ;
When I have put our seas 'twixt them and me,
Put thou Thy seas betwixt my sins and Thee.
As the tree's sap doth seek the root below
In winter, in my winter now I go,
Where none but Thee, the eternal root
Of true love, I may know.

Nor Thou nor Thy religion dost control
The amorousness of an harmonious soul;

But Thou wouldst have that love Thyself ; as Thou
Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now ;
Thou lovest not, till from loving more Thou free
My soul ; Who ever gives, takes liberty ;
Oh, if Thou carest not whom I love,
Alas ! Thou lovest not me.

Seal then this bill of my divorce to all,
On whom those fainter beams of love did fall ;
Marry those loves, which in youth scatter'd be
On fame, wit, hopes—false mistresses—to Thee.
Churches are best for prayer, that have least light ;
To see God only, I go out of sight ;
And to escape stormy days, I choose
An everlasting night.

Free Heart

Gracie Knoll

I run in the wake of my Father
Swept along by the waves of his grace
Each step is a bound
As I climb up the mountain on the road that leads to his place

I bask in the glory of my Lord
Weighed down by the weight of his love
Each breath is a milestone as I fly on the clouds to the city of his up
above

I rest in the peace of my King
Lulled by the song of his calm
Each verse is a kiss from his beautiful lips as he carries me home in
his arms

O Most Holy Our Father: Creator,
Redeemer, Consoler and Our Saviour.

Who art in Heaven:
in the Angels and in the Saints;
enlightening them unto knowledge,
because Thou, Lord, art Light,
inflaming them unto love,
because Thou, Lord, art Love;
indwelling and filling them unto blessedness,
because Thou, Lord, art the Highest Good,
the Eternal One,
from whom is every good,
without whom nothing is good.

Hallowed be Thy Name:
may the knowledge of Thee in us be made bright,
so that we may know,
what is the breadth of Thy benefactions,
the length of Thy promises,
the sublimity of Thy Majesty
and the depth of Thy judgments.

Thy Kingdom come:
so that Thou may reign in us by grace
and make us come unto Thy Kingdom,
where vision of Thee is made manifest,
love of Thee made perfect,
company with Thee blessed,
enjoyment of Thee everlasting.

Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven:
so that we may love Thee with our whole heart
by thinking of Thee always,

with our whole soul by desiring Thee always,
with our whole mind directing unto Thee all our intentions,
by seeking Thy honour in all things
and with all our strength
by expending all our strength
and sense of soul and body in submission to Thy
love and not in anything else;
and may we love our neighbours even as our very selves
by drawing all to Thy love to the extent of our strength,
by rejoicing over the good things of others
just as over our own and by compassionating them in evils
and by giving offense to no one.

Give us this day,
Thy Beloved Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Our Daily Bread:
to remember and understand and reverence the love,
which He had for us,
and those things,
which He said, did, or endured on our behalf.

And forgive us our debts:
by Thy ineffable Mercy,
and through the virtue of the Passion of Thy Beloved son
and by the merits and intercession of the Blessed Virgin and all Thy
elect.

As we also forgive our debtors:
and what we do not fully forgive,
Lord, make us fully forgive,
so that we may truly love our enemies
for the sake of Thee
and intercede devoutly on their behalf with Thee,
rendering to none evil for evil
and striving in all things to advance unto Thee.

And lead us not into temptation:
hidden or manifest, sudden or importune.

But deliver us from the evil:
past, present, and future.
Glory be to the Father.

Fountainhead**Alyssa Underwood**

Might there be a fountain
where souls long dead from thirst
find spirits raised to life in floods abounding free,
so that what once walked as corpse,
night-bound and blind, may see?
Old self exchanged for Treasure, diving in
tastes such rejuvenation as can't
be weighed by mortal measure—
wine unlike our earth-grown fruit whose petals fall,
from this Vine flowers the pleasantness of Love Divine
which bathes in healing waters all
who come as humble newborn with bold suck to dine.

Prayer for Absolution**Robert Herrick**

For those my unbaptized rhymes,
Writ in my wild unhallowed times,
For every sentence, clause, and word,
That's not inlaid with Thee, my Lord,
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book, that is not Thine.

But if, 'mongst all, Thou find'st here one
Worthy thy benediction,
That one of all the rest shall be
The glory of my work, and me.

Christ Love

Shirley Smothers

Heart beats young
heart beats old,
with a love of Christ
your heart beats bold.

Be ye rich
be ye poor,
with a love of Christ
you'll have so much more.

The rain falls
on just and unjust,
but remember Christ rain
settles the dust.

Don't float listlessly
on a sea of confusion,
for a life without Christ
is a life of delusion.

Don't be the sand
upon the sore,
open your heart
Christ will open the door.

In wondrous love Thou didst come down from Heaven
To immolate Thyself, O Christ, for me;
So, in my turn, my love to Thee is given,
I wish to suffer and to die for Thee.
Thou, Lord, has spoken this truth benign:
"To die for one loved tenderly
Of greatest love on Earth is sign;"
And now, such love is mine, such love for Thee!
Abide, abide with me, O Pilgrim blest!
Behind the hill fast sinks the dying day.
Helped by Thy Cross I mount the rocky crest;
Oh, come, to guide me on my heavenward way.
To be like Thee is my desire;
Thy voice finds echo in my soul.
Suffering I crave! Thy words of fire
Lift me above Earth's mire, and sin's control.
Chanting Thy victories, gloriously sublime,
The Seraphim all Heaven cry to me,
That even Thou, to conquer sin and crime,
Upon this Earth a sufferer needs must be.
For me, upon life's dreary way,
What scorn, what anguish, Thou didst bear
Let me grow humble every day,
Be least of all, always, Thy lot to share!
Ah, Christ! Thy great example teaches me
Myself to humble, honours to despise.
Little and low like Thee I choose to be,
Forgetting self, so I may charm Thine eyes.
My peace I find in solitude,
Nor ask I more, dear Lord, than this:
Be Thou my sole beatitude,
Ever in Thee renewed, my joy, my bliss.
Thou, the great God Whom Earth and Heaven adore,
Thou dwellest a prisoner for me night and day;

And every hour I hear Thy voice implore:
"I thirst – I thirst – I thirst – for love always!"
I, too, Thy prisoner am I;
I, too, cry ever unto Thee
Thine own divine and tender cry:
"I thirst! Oh, let me die of love for Thee!"
For love of Thee I thirst! Fulfil my hope;
Augment in me Thine own celestial flame!
For love of Thee I thirst! Too scant Earth's scope.
The glorious Vision of Thy Face I claim!
My long slow martyrdom of fire
Still more and more consumeth me.
Thou art my joy, my own desire.
Jesu! May I expire of love for Thee!

Circus Act

Stephanie Malley

My life's become a balancing routine,
A high-wire act, relying on my own
Two feet to safely carry me between
Points A and B. I'm in my comfort zone
Because I feel I'm in control, and yet
I'm tense, not even daring to look down
At God who's always been my safety net.
Why risk a fall? I'm not a circus clown.
But there's a braver way to live that lies
Within my grasp, if I can just let go
And leap into the open air, my eyes
Intent on two strong hands whose clasp I know.
Why inch along, uptight and ill at ease,
When I can soar with God on faith's trapeze?

Was it a dream-the outline of that Face,
Which seemed to lighten from the Holy Place,
Meeting all want, fulfilling all desire?
A dream-the music of that Voice most sweet,
Which seemed to rise above the chanting choir?
A dream-the treadings of those wounded Feet,
Pacing about the Altar still and slow?
Illusion-all I thought to love and know?

Strong Sorrow-wrestler of Mount Calvary,
Speak through the blackness of Thine Agony,
Say, have I ever known Thee? answer me!
Speak, Merciful and Mighty, lifted up
To draw those to Thee who have power to will
The roseate Baptism, and the bitter Cup,
The Royal Graces of the Cross-crowned Hill.

Terrible Golgotha-among the bones
Which whiten thee, as thick as splintered stones
Where headlong rocks have crushed themselves away,
I stumble on-Is it too dark to pray?

remember first love?
remembering to breathe
forgetting to hide
aching void that filled up with a rush
and emptied back fast into pain
counting the moments till the next rush
not wanting to tell of it
not able to stop with it

carrying a fire so deep that it charred
my innermost innermost

how did it happen?
how did it become normal,
blunted into routine?
wonder turned into duty
toil verging on tedium
watching the clock, awaiting escape
nothing to talk about
no news to share
dousing the smouldering ashes
in my innermost innermost

can I find it again
that breathless first love,
recapture the first careless rapture?
He has no need of my love
why would God almighty need me?
But He wants it, He yearns for it
offers new kindling for the ashes
pure gold for base metal
red-hot love for cold duty
why not take it? why not?
what is it I am afraid of
in my innermost innermost?

Hymn of The Children

John Greenleaf Whittier

Thine are all the gifts, O God!
Thine the broken bread;
Let the naked feet be shod,
And the starving fed.

Let Thy children, by Thy grace,
Give as they abound,
Till the poor have breathing-space,
And the lost are found.

Wiser than the miser's hoards
Is the giver's choice;
Sweeter than the song of birds
Is the thankful voice.

Welcome smiles on faces sad
As the flowers of spring;
Let the tender hearts be glad
With the joy they bring.

Happier for their pity's sake
Make their sports and plays,
And from lips of childhood take
Thy perfected praise!

Monastery of the Ordinary

Daniel J Harris

The field cats hunt my toes, catching my thoughts.
The shade tree, sun dialled in.
I walk in place, not getting any closer nor further away.
The road pushes gassy cars like intestines.
Adding girth to Mass.
The breeze feeds my lungs, holy gale.
I look in the 'lost and found' to see if I was both.
Honey baring smile at my sins.
Rev. Cure wants to rally the congregation of the love sick.
I sacrilegiously laugh at the divine comedy.
Sailing on the worship.
Brahma is leading the cast, I watch, detached.
My hair ripples and reflexes the light, no need for jewellery.

The cat's tail swishes with the rhythm of a preachers sermon.
The rail road 'crosses' for miles, well out of sight.
The crows sing, the choir.
Mosquitoes come for the donations.
Just another day at church.

God Our Help**Anon**

With floods and storms thus we be tossed,
Awake, good Lord, to Thee we cry.
Our ship is almost sunk and lost.
Thy mercy help our misery.
Man's strength is weak: man's wit is dull:
Man's reason's blind. These things t'amend,
Thy hand, O Lord, of might is full;
Awake betime, and help us send.
In Thee we trust, and in no wight:
Save us as chickens under the hen.
Our crookedness Thou canst make right,
Glory to Thee for aye. Amen.

Dreams Lie Here**Mackenzie Dwyer**

Dreams lie here, where memories arch their spines.
And where the sun like your uvula climbs the sky
as dawn yawns, Earth wakes and tastes its breath:
daylight wears dreams as badges on its breast.

And when you close your mouth, still dreams lie.
They reflect and shimmer atop glassy night,
when the moon and I watch with open mouths

how clouds shiver as moments dip south.

Dreams lie from dawn to near-midnight wishes,
strewn from hammocks to satellite dishes.
Yet each must claim its right to one place:
a cause to call home, or cupped in a face?

Gone in sleep or long awake, here's the truth:
of all shelters dreams choose, mine lie with you.

Saviour of mankind, Man, Emmanuel!**George Sandys**

Saviour of mankind, Man, Emmanuel!
Who sinless died for sin, who vanquished hell;
The first-fruits of the grave; whose life did give
Light to our darkness; in whose death we live:—
Oh! strengthen Thou my faith, convert my will,
That mine may Thine obey; protect me still,
So that the latter death may not devour
My soul, sealed with Thy seal.—So, in the hour
When Thou (whose body sanctified this tomb,
Unjustly judged), a glorious judge shall come
To judge the world with justice; by that sign
I may be known, and entertained for Thine.

The War is Over**Brendon Ward**

Hostile in mind
In heart your enemy
Though blind to our rebellion
You won our liberty

You did so as the darkness
Encompassed the land
You rescued us from satan
With an out stretched hand

Your peace you give us
As you took our punishment
Pierced for our transgression
A crucified torment.

You rose the Lord of Glory
Conqueror over death
Though you gave up your spirit
That was not your final breath

You were definitely buried
But gone now is that stone
You ascended into glory
And sit upon a throne

Our war with you is over
As you became our peace
You are the Lord our freedom
In the year of release.

God Be My Vision

Gaelic 8th Century

Adapted by Daniel Paul Gilbert

God by my vision be the king of my heart,
nothing else counts to me save that You Are.
You are my best thought by day and by night,
waking or sleeping your presence my light.

God be my wisdom and be my true word,

forever with you and you with me Lord.
You're my Great Father and I'm your true son,
you dwell within me and with you I'm one.

God be my battle shield, sword for the fight,
Lord be my dignity and my delight.
You're my soul's shelter and you're my high tower,
raising me heavenward O power of my power.

Riches I need not nor man's empty praise,
You're my inheritance now and always.
You and You only are first in my heart,
High king of heaven, my treasure you are.

High king of heaven my victory is won,
may I reach heavens joy, bright heavens sun.
Heart of my own heart whatever may fall,
still be my vision O ruler of all.

Lord of Poetry

Steve Page

Lord, depose our Apollo,
Be our true Lord of Poetry
And so give us poetic licence
To fulfil
To craft
To create
With a God given palette
In your own imagery.
Blaze a trail from your heart
To the spirits of men
Taking captives and setting them free
To feast on your words of life
To move to your music of love

To immerse into an eternity of dance and celebration
And so to reflect your divine Artisan Soul.

The night is come like to the day

Sir Thomas Browne

The night is come like to the day,
Depart not Thou, Great God, away ;
Let not my sins, black as the night,
Eclipse the lustre of Thy light.
Keep still in my horizon, for to me
The sun makes not the day, but Thee.
Thou whose nature cannot sleep,
On my temple sentry keep ;
Guard me 'gainst those watchful foes
Whose eyes are open, while mine close.
Let no dreams my head infest
But such as Jacob's temple blest.
While I do rest, my soul advance,
Make my sleep a holy trance.
That I may, my rest being wrought,
Awake into some holy thought,
And with as active vigour run
My course as doth the noble sun.
Sleep is a death ! O make me try
By sleeping what it is to die,
And as gently lay my head
On my grave as on my bed.
Howe'er I rest, Great God, let me
Awake again, at last, with Thee.
And thus assured behold I lie
Securely, or to wake or die.

a silent deep breath
gazing up at the sky
He now sees death
hammers fly up high

lay Him down on lacerated spine
little do they know, they mock the Divine
soon this sky will show darkness
prove He's King, none will deny

nails hit wood
through miracle hands
a violent wail is His reply

spit glides down His heavenly cheek
sour wine runs down burst lips
'forsaken I am' 'tis now His brood
in His side spears now pry

a single tear drop lands on His face
not from His eye
but from the Father's sky

IT IS FINISHED He cried
a single rabbi brings sin to defeat
as death comes by

His absence will be fleet
for us: not yet goodbye

Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue;
thee, only thee, resolved to know
in all I think or speak or do.

The task thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes mine inmost substance see,
and labour on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.

Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
and every moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look,
and hasten to thy glorious day.

For thee delightfully employ
whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given;
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heav'n.

What is it better for my heart to be like?
Hard as steel as a sword so to shine?
Or of something delicate
Like intertwined feathers

That they might tenderly touch
And provide a place for heads to rest?
I find myself fixating
Thinking on clay
That in the fires of aggression and hatred
It can be hard baked
And shattered into sharpened shards
That say "don't come close"
When it breaks
I am not a potter
Like my Heavenly Father
So forgive any scientific inaccuracy on my part
And permit me poetic license
Using clay to form a heart
But it is my belief it is a time sensitive thing
It needs water to soften
And hands to make it shape
Before it stops fast and hardens
Before it forgets that it's the substance of which it is made
So I think it's best
For my heart to always remember that it's clay
For it to maintain its malleability
As it retains its fallibility
As it surrenders to an artist
Who is never making people wrong
Who made these lungs and windpipe
To make words
And sing songs
And tell my wife I love her
And my friends that they are strong
But more than this
That it is a heart
That is dearly loved
Because clay feels best
Between fingers
It replies
Gratified

When it is caressed
So let his hands
Reach in
And know
As you are
With all the mess
That in his eyes
Your potential
Is limitless

May the Light of lights come**Traditional Celtic**

May the Light of lights come to my dark heart;
May the Spirit's wisdom come to me from my Saviour.
May the peace of the Spirit be mine this night,
The peace of the Son be mine this night,
The peace of the Father be mine this night,
The peace of all peace be mine this night,
Each morning and evening of my life.

Celtic Storm**Marisa Rosie**

Wind whistling
Stormy sea rolling
Waves crashing
On white sandy shore

Misty wisps billowing
Dark clouds gathering
Rain lashing

Mystical island calls

Mountains declaring
Valleys rejoicing
Rocks shouting
Proclaiming your praise

Ruins remaining
Stand guarding
Ancients inviting
Celtic saints gone before

God is speaking
Creator power
King of nature
Beckoning us home

The Crucifixion

Alice Meynell

Oh, man's capacity
For spiritual sorrow, corporal pain!
Who has explored the deepmost of that sea,
With heavy links of a far-fathoming chain?

That melancholy lead,
Let down in guilty and in innocent hold,
Yea into childish hands deliverèd,
Leaves the sequestered floor unreached, untold.

One only has explored
The deepmost; but He did not die of it.
Not yet, not yet He died. Man's human Lord
Touched the extreme; it is not infinite.

But over the abyss
Of God's capacity for woe He stayed
One hesitating hour; what gulf was this?
Forsaken He went down, and was afraid.

Sight

Chloe Ross

When you look at me, what do You see?
The same old broken mess, a shell of my former self
A never ending cycle of darkness, despair and suffering
An unsolvable puzzle
A person for who there is no quick fix, no short cut, no possible
resolution

My life is like a disordered thread
So knotted, twisted and tangled that it just has no use
No way to unpick the mess, for untangling actually leads to further
knotting
The start of the knot seems forgotten and lost as the cycle continues
again and again
Will there be an end to it? The end seems distant, unreachable,
unattainable

Or do these knots make this fragile thread stronger?
Maybe You are weaving something that looks different to what I see
Is the further knotting necessary to free this thread again?
Amongst the bigger backdrop of life maybe this knotted mess has
purpose
Maybe unravelling is not the aim, not the goal

Is it through this mess that my true self is revealed?
Is there healing in the entangling, in the mess?
Did I have to go through this to find the real me?

For it was this that made me draw near to You, this that made me feel
You closer than my skin
Made me welcome You in, let You stare into the deepest hidden
depths of me
For it is only You that can see the true me

When you look at me, what do You see?
Do You instead see a masterpiece?
A work of art in the making
Beauty in amongst the pain and despair, for You reside there
You alone can see the radiance in the pain
Like a baby after childbirth, the suffering has a purpose and a name

Jesus; my hope and my saviour
Immovable, unshakeable, unbreakable
A victor who is for me and beside me
Who created me and died for me
Ever-present despite how I feel
Someone who understands me better than myself
Who knows me completely yet loves me anyway
A forgiving healer who I can stand before unashamed
In his presence, brokenness is made whole, restoration is begun
They say that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder
Then in his eyes I am truly beautiful, inside and out

A Ballad of Trees and the Master

Sidney Lanier

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him;
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'T was on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came.

Of Bridges, Then

Mike Wahl

The river, bridged.
Complete, joining two shores.
East comes to west.
The river still twists and turns,
Meandering, but no longer segregating.
The bridge brings unity.

The words, unabridged.
Complete, joining all shores.
East, orient, express, speedy,
fast, draw, wild, west.
East comes to west.
The words circle to unity.

The Psalmist says
As far as the east
is from the west
have your wrongs been removed.
He is the Bridge.
He brings unity.

At Babel they built

A tower to be a bridge to God.
He took their words.
He took their bridges.
The one for man's meddling,
The one for man's pride.

Bridges can conquer rivers,
But bridges can't cross oceans.
Bridges can build worlds of words.
Bridges of words can bind men together;
Mere bridges can't bind us to God.
Except one: He who is Bridge. Unity.

Doxology

Thomas Ken

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Biographies

Joseph Addison 1672-1719 was an English poet, playwright and politician and founder of The Spectator magazine.

Anna Angell lives in rural North Wales with her husband and two young children. She writes poems, songs, sketches and stories - fitted in around all the other stuff! You can find more of her work at www.annaangell.co.uk or listen on bandcamp.com

John Bannister Tabb 1845-1909 was a Roman catholic Priest, professor and poet.

Richard Baxter 1615-1691 was a Puritan Church leader, hymn writer and poet.

Mirjam Epie Bide is from Berlin, Germany, a lawyer by profession. She started writing unexpectedly for herself and publishes through her blog: www.TheGlimmeringSoul.com.

Jacques Boulet was raised on a farm in northern Alberta, Canada. He is married to Paige and has two daughters. He discovered the joy of writing poetry in the midst of depression, but has continued to write about various topics.

Fran Brady mainly writes novels and short stories. She has been a committed Christian for almost thirty years. She lives in a village in West Lothian with her husband, John. They have three daughters, one son, seven grandchildren - and an old dog. www.franbrady.com

William Blake 1757-1827 was an English poet and artist. He was known for his visionary art and poetry which inspired musicians and artists since.

Jane Blanchard lives and writes in Georgia. Her poetry has appeared in many venues in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Austria, India, and Australia. Her first collection, Unloosed, is available from White Violet Press of Kelsay Books.

Robert Bridges 1844-1930 was Poet Laureate in Britain between 1913 and 1930. He also wrote and translated a number of hymns.

Anne Bronte 1820-1849 was a novelist and poet and the youngest of the famous Bronte sisters.

Emily Bronte 1818-1848 was an English novelist and poet. She is best known for her novel Wuthering Heights.

Sir Thomas Browne 1605-1682 was an English author and a scholar of science, medicine and religion.

Richard Chenevix Trench 1807-1886 was an Anglican archbishop and a poet who wrote many books and whose work was incorporated into hymns.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton 1874-1936 was an English poet, writer and philosopher. He wrote fiction and nonfiction and books on theology and apologetics.

Sally Clark has had poetry published in numerous literary journals, magazines, and anthologies and recently, one of her poems received recognition in American Poetry Review and Poetry Magazine.

Mary Coleridge 1861-1907 was a British novelist and poet. She was also the great-grandniece of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1772-1834 was an English poet and founder of the Romantic Movement. He is best known for his poems The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Kubla Khan.

Fanny Crosby 1820-1915 was an American mission worker, poet and composer. She wrote over 8000 hymns during her life despite being blind from birth.

John Danyl 1564-1626 was an English songwriter and Lute player and author of Songs for Lute, Viol and Voice.

Shirley Jean Davis was born in Mattoon Illinois and currently work as a writer and motivational speaker using my talents to help people who have suffered trauma in their lives.

Sheila Donald has written poetry since she was a teenager . She has written a book and writes regular articles for a number of different publications but poetry was always her first writing form.

John Donne 1573-1631 was an English poet and Church of England cleric who wrote poems about love, religion and death. The Flea is one of his most famous poems.

Emily Dickinson 1830-1886 was an American poet who had several volumes of poetry published.

Mackenzie Dwyer has known a longing to make a mark on literature since she could read. Her work has garnered numerous shortlist mentions as well as recognition from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and publication in several poetry journals.

John Charles Earle 1849-1903 was an English lawyer, a poet and hymnologist.

Charles C Finn is a writer and also works as a professional counsellor. He has been married to Penny for 36 years and they are the parents of two children adopted from Korea and Hong Kong who are now adults. Charlie glories in thunderstorms, flowers and everyday miracles.

St Francis of Assisi 1181-1226 was a Friar and preacher and founder of the Franciscan Orders.

Khalil Gibran 1883-1931 was a Lebanese American poet, artist and writer best known for his book The Prophet.

Daniel Paul Gilbert is an NHS administrator who lives in Coventry with his wife Rachel. In his spare time he enjoys writing, playing music and sometimes combining the two. He has also independently published a number of poetry books. You can find out more about his work at www.danielpaulgilbert.tk

Robert Grayson lives and works in Oxford, is part of Emmanuel Church Oxford and has been apprehended by the Triune God.

John Greenleaf Whittier 1807-1892 was an American poet and a Quaker who was also known for his writings against slavery.

Ethan Hardin of Boone, NC is a student of God's Word and a lover of the outdoors, endlessly inspired in seeing His ways modelled by His creation. He has also put some of his poems to music available at <http://noisetrade.com/ethanhardin>.

Daniel J Harris is the owner/host of an "All Styles from All over the World" music podcast called The SoupyGato Show.

Edwin Hatch 1835-1889 was an English theologian and scholar and is best known for his academic work but he also wrote some hymns.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans 1793-1835 was an English poet who wrote both secular and sacred works.

George Herbert 1593-1633 was a Welsh poet and priest and known as being one of Britain's foremost lyricists.

Robert Herrick 1591-1674 was an English poet and cleric best known for his book Hesperides.

Justin Hoste and his family are international Christian workers in Buenos Aires, Argentina working with local communities who would never step foot in a church. Justin loves literature and poetry and says that it provides a unique platform to talk about all that is important to us as human beings.

Sam Isaacson is a husband and dad and is on the leadership team of his local church in West London. He uses his free time to watch American football, listen to podcasts about table top roleplaying games, write poetry and dream about the life coaching business he owns.

Catherine Jarvis was born in Cambridge Massachusetts, but raised in Tucson Arizona. She loves all the Arts and her love of poetry came when she started writing age 11 years old. She has been a redeemed Christian for ten years.

Cynthia Jean has been writing off and on since 1970. She is passionate about her God. Most days she can be found in her garden tending to her perennial flower beds spring through fall. She enjoys nature and walking, and is an avid reader. She resides in Michigan and has three grown children.

Vanessa Johnston is a single mom of three still learning to trust Jesus for everything.

St John of the Cross 1542-1591 was a poet and reformer known best for his writings on the soul.

St. John of Damascus 675-749 was a father of the Eastern Orthodox Church and a writer who contributed to areas of law, theology and music.

Naomi Jurczak works as an Educator, inspiring young people to understand politics and encouraging them to take ownership of their democracy. She loves being outside and feels most spiritual when amongst nature. She feels passionately about the homeless, those with mental

health illnesses and the environment. She always carries a moleskine around and finds writing an entirely cathartic process.

Thomas Ken 1637-1711 was an English cleric and considered one of the fathers of hymnology.

Gracie Knoll loves to write poetry, especially worship poetry and is a member of the Hello Poetry community.

Nancy Julien Kopp of Manhattan, KS, is published in many anthologies, newspapers and magazines. She is also an award-winning children's writer. Her blog contains tips and encouragement for writers. www.writergrannysworld.blogspot.com

Briana B. Lamberson is a wife and a mum. Prior to marriage, she dreamed of becoming a published writer, and has received a Bachelor of Arts in English and Creative Writing. Her spiritual journey beckoned her from nondenominational believer in Christ to seeking His face in the Messianic Hebraic roots of her faith.

Sidney Lanier 1842-1881 was an American, poet and musician who eventually became a university professor.

D H Lawrence 1885-1930 was an English novelist and poet best known for his novel Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Samuel Longfellow 1819-1892 was an American hymn writer and pastor.

Henry Francis Lyte 1793-1847 was an Anglican hymn writer and poet. Some of his poems have become some of the world's most well-known hymns.

George MacDonald 1824-1905 was a Scottish author, poet and minister. He was also a pioneering figure within the area of fantasy literature and influenced many writers.

Dorinda MacDowell 72 years old, happily married and blessed with two wonderful daughters and two equally wonderful grandsons.

Marion MacGregor White is a Christian writer and broadcaster. She is a Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Skye in Scotland.

Digby Mackworth Dolben 1848-1867 was an English poet. He had just one book of poetry published after his death aged 19.

Stephanie Malley is a stay-at-home mother of four daughters who enjoys writing poetry for children and adults.

Anudeep Manne is from South India. He is a Christian protestant and a Doctor of Pharmacy graduate and loves reading books

Linda Maxwell is a Catholic convert who has published work in Eastern Kentucky University's Chaffin Journal-, UNLV's Wordriver, The Catholic Digest, Poetry as Prayer, Southern Women's Review and The Litchfield Review. She currently resides in Georgetown, South Carolina.

John Mason 1646-1694 was a priest, poet and hymn writer from Northamptonshire.

Brian D. McLaren is an author, speaker, activist, and public theologian. A former college English teacher and pastor, he is an ecumenical global networker among innovative Christian leaders. You can find out more at www.brianmclaren.net

Carol Dee Meeks has been an Oklahoma senior poet laureate and New Mexico senior poet laureate. She has also been published in a variety of poetry magazines.

Doreen Mellor resides in the UK and Doreen is a very keen photographer based in the UK.

James Mellor lives in Surrey with his wife Doreen where they are part of Coign Church.

Marybeth Mitcham holds her MPH and works as a nutrition and healthy living educator, a freelance writer, and doctoral student. In her spare time, loves to hike and rock climb with her family, ride her motorcycle, or hover by the woodstove.

Alice Meynell 1847-1922 was an English poet and writer who was also part of the Suffragette movement.

Andrea Mill lives in Edinburgh and attends Bristo Baptist Church. She is a psychotherapist part-time as well as being the carer for her 2 grandson. She is married to Robert has a son and a daughter.

Linna Monteath lives in Buchlyvie, near Stirling, Scotland. A retired English teacher who is very interested in the natural world, she is also a member of a Christian Writers' Group in Linlithgow.

Jaco Mostert enjoys reading, writing and playing guitar. He was a Newspaper Journalist for eight years, and a teacher for four years teaching Journalism, Media Law, Political Science and English. His favourite subject however still remains his personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

John Newton 1725-1807 was famously the captain of a slave ship but later became an Anglican priest and a prominent Abolitionist as well as a writer and hymnist.

Cindy Norton currently lives in Iowa in the United States, is happily married to a Godly man and blessed with 1 daughter, 4 stepsons, 2 grandchildren and two dogs. Her main focus in life is growing in Christ while writing what He places on her heart

Steve Page is from London and worships at Redeemer Church London. He is an investigator by day job and a poet 24 hours a day.

Helen L Parmelee 1821-1865 was an American poet. Her book Poems, religious and miscellaneous was published after her death.

Joseph Mary Plunkett 1887-1916 was an Irish poet and journalist and a leader of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland.

Alexander Pope 1688-1744 was an English poet known for his satirical verse and his translations of The Odyssey and Iliad by Homer.

MK Punky is a best-selling author of many books and poet laureate of Vista Street Community Library and a commended poet of the 2016 Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival's creative writing competition.

Steven Quantick lives in Cardiff with his wife and is a regular member of the musical worship team at City Church. He loves writing scripts and music as well as poetry. Basically if it's creative he loves doing it.

William Rees 1859-1936 was a Welsh writer and priest who wrote 2 books and also collaborated on hymns.

Pam Robinson works as a Community Development Manager in her local Church of England church, is a wife and carer to her husband of 26 years, mum to her daughter and nana to her two boys, and mum and carer to her adult son.

Robert Robinson 1726-1791 was a pastor and hymn writer as well an influential Baptist scholar.

Marisa Rosie is a full time Christian worker with YWAM as well as a Christian writer and creative writing tutor. She has published a children's book called Marigold, the Journey Home and a kindle book of short stories called Encounters With Love.

Chloe Ross has struggled with mental health problems but has learnt that our God is present and is good and this is not dependent on how we feel or the events in our life. She affirms that He is faithful and will bring us through.

Christina Rossetti 1830-1894 was an English poet who wrote romantic, devotional and Children's poetry.

David Russell resides in the USA and has been a Messianic believer much of his life. He enjoys blogging, writing fiction, playing the card game Uno, and is prolific at the piano. His blog is titled Grafted In And On The Journey.

Walter Scott 1771-1832 was a Scottish writer and poet best known for his Waverley Novels Series.

Kelsey Lynn Sivertson is a Holland, Michigan native with a passion for all things poetic and transparent. A receptionist, a cook, and a student, she is working on her Creative Writing degree at Hope College and hopes to one day publish a book of poetry and live in an old house with a large porch and a willow tree in the backyard.

Annie Smith 1828-1855 was an American Seventh day Adventist, poet and hymn writer.

Shirley Smothers is a poet who lives in Texas and who has been writing for about ten years. Her poems have been published online and in a variety of poetry journals.

Edmund Spenser 1552-1599 was an English poet best known for his epic poem The Fairie Queene.

Anne Steele 1717-1788 was a Baptist from Hampshire in England. She published 2 books of poetry and wrote hymns.

Andy Stinson is a priest, deacon, husband, father, poet and musician. He lives near Chester and works to help people find Jesus and to build the Kingdom of God.

Synesius of Cyrene 373-414 was a Greek bishop whose writings have since been converted into hymns.

St Teresa of Avila 1515-1582 was a Catholic reformer and writer. Her writings remain an important part of renaissance literature and Christian mysticism.

St Therese of Lisieux 1873-1897 was a Catholic nun also known as The Little Flower of Jesus. She has been influential because of her simple and practical approach to life.

Thomas Traherne 1636-1674 was an English poet, writer and theologian best known for his book of reflections, *Centuries of Meditations*.

Trevor Thorn is a blogger, a fundraiser, an armchair Scientist and a Lay Minister in the Church of England. You can see more of his work on his blog at <http://crossandcosmos.blogspot.co.uk/>

Elizabeth Trondsen is an artist, a writer, a teacher of young children, and a follower of Jesus since the age of seventeen. Her journey with Christ has been that of a sheep and her Shepherd, with seasons of staying near and seasons of wandering. I am thankful that He keeps wooing me with His Love, as a Bridegroom with His Bride, so that I keep running back to Him.

Alyssa Underwood - A wretch-made-heir who has no other ambition in life than to call the thirsty to come to the Fountain of Living Water.

Ludwig Van Beethoven 1770-1827 was a German composer and pianist and one of the world's most notable composers.

Nelize van Driel is an expressive young South African soul interested in artistic, poetic, linguistic, verbal, aquarium, sporty and musical endeavours. She enjoys reflecting on nature, Christianity and working with her hands. She strives to find refuge spiritually in the Father, Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ and says "What better way is there than worshipping Him with the ink coming from my heart!"

Henry Vaughan 1621-1695 was a Welsh, physician, author and poet who wrote secular and sacred poetry.

Carmen VonTickner is a retired teacher from the California School for the Deaf, in Fremont, CA.

Mike Wahl is poet of opportunity, grabbing concepts and phrases from observations in his rural surroundings, and from the intrigues of family, politics, and religion.

Brendon Ward is a husband, father, and servant-in-training of the gospel in New Zealand having walked with Jesus (or rather, known Jesus to be walking with him) since his late teens.

Isaac Watts 1674-1748 was an English Christian Minister, theologian and hymn writer who wrote over 700 hymns.

Charles Wesley 1707-1788 was a leader of the Methodist movement in England and known for writing over 6000 hymns.

John Wesley 1703-1791 was a cleric, theologian and writer and a founder of the Methodist movement.

William Whiting 1825-1878 was an English writer who wrote two collections of poetry and a number of hymns.

Jeremy Williams is a blogger and freelance writer based in Luton, UK, specializing in social justice and environmental issues. His family are connected with a Baptist church in the town, and are very involved in planting out and leading smaller missional communities.

William Williams 1717-1791 was a hymn writer, poet and author and regarded as Wales's most famous hymn writer.

Dave Wise is a blogger, a father, a Christ-follower, and a husband. His blog www.davewisematters.com is about mental health topics, recovery, and faith and life. He lives with my wife in St. Louis, Missouri in the United States.

Lovely Ybanez is a poet and a member of the Hello Poetry website.

Tami Zacharias lives in Canada and works for the Christian charity Operation Mobilisation. She enjoys studying, kickboxing, TV crime shows, and conversations about feminism and tea.